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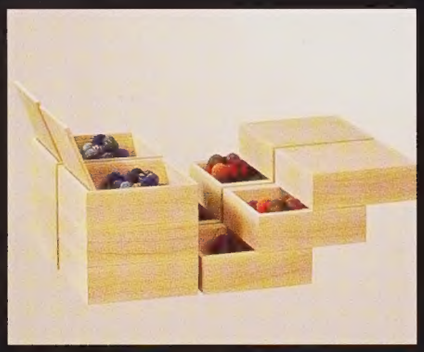

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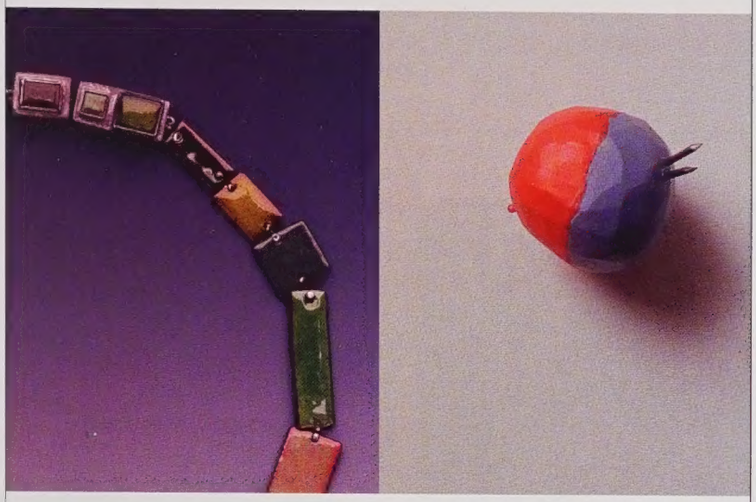

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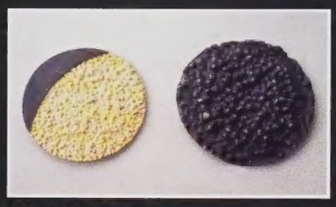

Georg Dobler
Eclipse, 1998
Gold, silver
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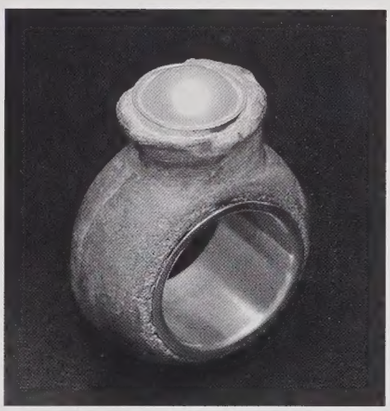

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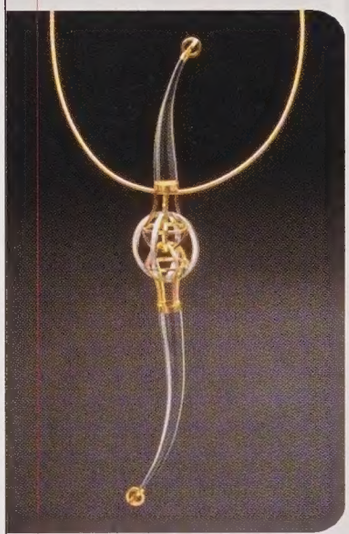

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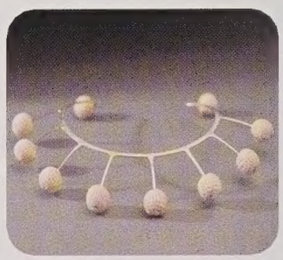

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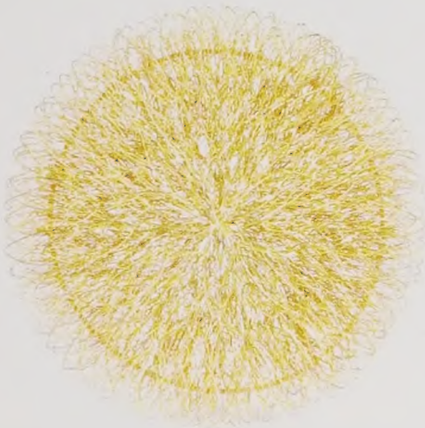

Giovanni Corvaja, brooch 18ct gold, 2000

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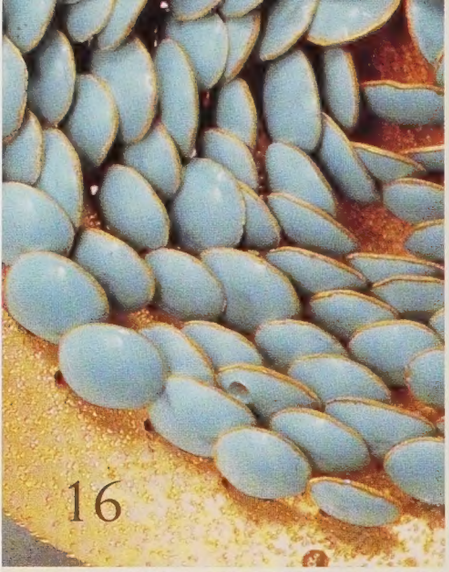

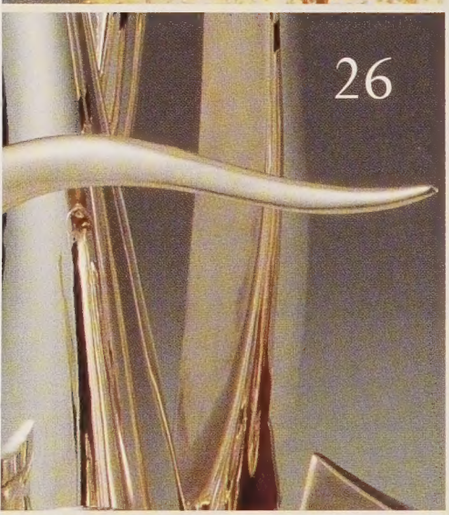

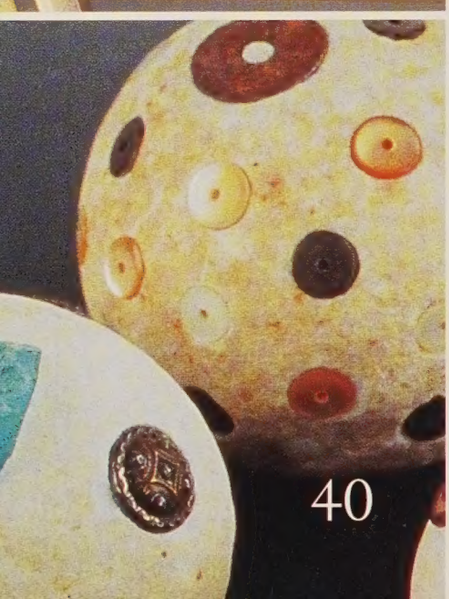

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Jacqueline Ryan
Brooch, 1996
18k gold, enamel
2" diam.

Michael and Maureen Banner
Coffee/Tea Service, 1997
sterling silver
height 17"
Photo: Paul Rocheleau

Rob Greene
Brooch, 1999
rutilated quartz, fabricated 18k
$2\,^{3}/_{8} \times 1\,^{1}/_{4}$"
Photo: Glenn Moody

Chris Ramsay
Inlaid River Stones, 1998-99
marble and found objects
27 x 17 x 17"

cover
Giovanni Corvaja
Brooch, 1998
18k gold, black palladium
$2\,^{5}/_{8}$" diam.
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from the editor

SUZANNE RAMLJAK

It gives me great pleasure to address the readers of *Metalsmith* as the new editor of this fine publication. *Metalsmith* has had a distinguished twenty-year history documenting and illuminating the field, and I am proud to carry the metals torch into the future. I come to the position with an equal love of the written word and the metal arts, and I look forward to indulging these two passions on the pages of this magazine.

The role of an editor can be compared to that of a film director, who guides the efforts of the crew and cast toward a desired goal. Although as editor I may hold the director's megaphone, the final product is the result of a collaborative process. A magazine is a collective endeavor requiring the talents of many individuals, including artists, writers, photographers, and designers. Ultimately, the success of a magazine, like any public medium, is determined by those who receive it—the audience and readers.

It is fitting that many of the articles in this issue of *Metalsmith* speak to the subject of collaborative work. The husband-wife jewelers featured in our cover story—Giovanni Corvaja and Jacqueline Ryan—collaborate in life and business, though they do not actually work together on the pieces they create. A more direct creative partnership is found in the couple Michael and Maureen Banner, who are mutually involved in making their holloware pieces, from concept to drawings to fabrication. Appropriately enough, this article was written by the writer team of Patricia Harris and David Lyon, whose combined voice is as seamless and confident as a Banner teapot. Although he works alone, Rob Greene's approach to nature can be deemed a collaborative one, as he takes his cues from the stone's formations to create his gold brooch settings. And the symbiotic relationship between artists' work and the objects they collect is the subject of Kathleen Browne's revealing article "Object Lessons."

Like all good collaborations, I expect that my relationship with *Metalsmith* and its readers will be responsive and interactive. While you will see changes over the upcoming months, they will be gradual and measured, with new departments added and others rotated from issue to issue. Together, I hope we can establish a rapport built on a shared sense of commitment and curiosity. ■

SR

METALSMITH

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designers and metalsmiths

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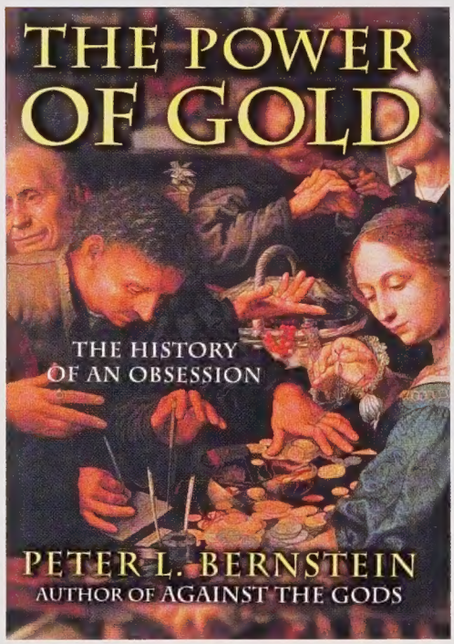
THE POWER OF GOLD: THE HISTORY OF AN OBSESSION

PETER L. BERNSTEIN
JOHN WILEY & SONS, INC. 2000

by **James Gardner**



"The wonderful thing about gold," Peter L. Bernstein writes in his entertaining new book, "is that its achievements in its critical role as the prototype of wealth and money did nothing to diminish its equally vital role as adornment and a radiant form of beauty. Unlike other forms of money, gold has never lost its poetic quality. It has always been both sacred and profane." At the heart of *The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession*, is a mystery that neither the author nor anyone else has been able to crack: What is it about this yellowish metal (whose very name, we learn, is related to the German *gelb*, which means "yellow") that has caused it to hold such empire, and for so long, over the human heart and the human mind?

Gold is almost as immediate and direct in its appeal to the brain as are hunger, thirst, and sexual longing. Indeed, though Bernstein nowhere mentions Wagner's great epic of the Rhein gold, it is worth remembering that, in this legend, even love is sacrificed to the gleaming god. Certainly, gold is beautiful to look at. But so is silver and so is bronze. And yet, aside from a few dental procedures, this metal has very limited practical use compared to steel, for instance, which sells for several hundred times less than gold. Usually, such material fetishes are the domain of an earlier, more primitive period in human development. But to this day, gold continues to affect the wealth of nations, to transcend national differences, and to serve as the cause of wars.

In essence, Bernstein has written two books about gold. The first is a breezily diverting account of it from the dawn of human society until the middle of the seventeenth century. He begins among the Egyptians and the Jews and makes the interesting point that the latter, even as slaves to the former, must have had sizable quantities of gold with them, in order to be able to create the golden calf during their Exodus. We learn as well that Darius, the great king of Persia, had a golden bathtub and that Crassus, the wealthiest of the Romans, came to a bad end when, after his defeat at Carrhae in 53 B.C.E., the victorious Parthians poured molten gold down his throat.

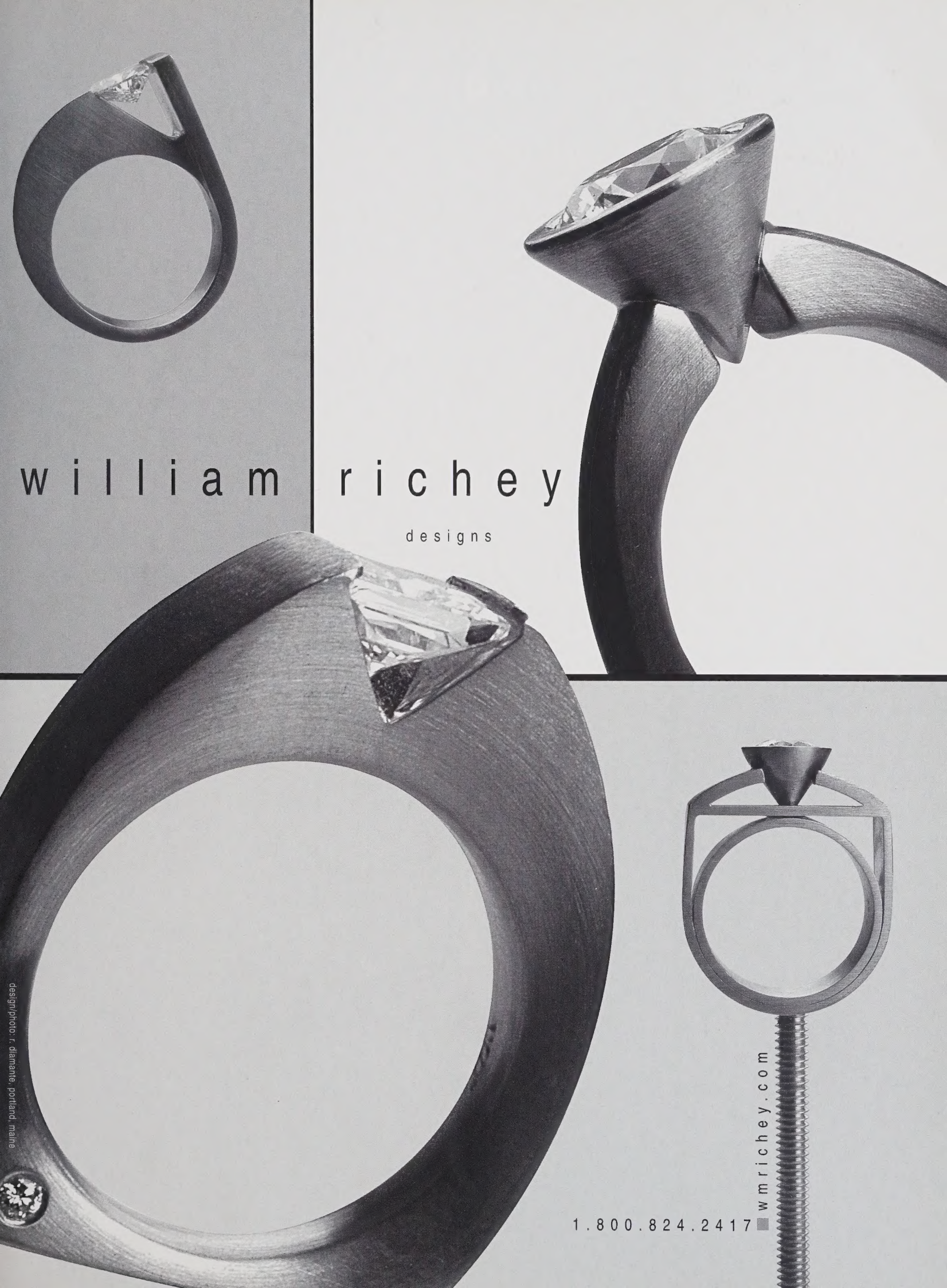
Bernstein traces the history of coinage from its invention by the Lydians under Croesus in the sixth century B.C.E., through the Byzantine bezant and the Moslems' dinar, which replaced it. And though he tells his story with spirit throughout, it is sometimes apparent that he is on shaky ground. He appears, for example, not to appreciate that Darius, who invaded Greece in 490 B.C.E., is not the same man who surrendered to Alexander after the battle of Issus in 331 B.C.E. Likewise, he places Charlemagne among the Merovingian kings of France, even though this ruler was the greatest of the Carolingians. True, neither these mistakes nor others like them damage the story that he tells; nevertheless, they betray a somewhat imperfect knowledge of world history.

It is rather in the second half of the book that Bernstein achieves his full potential. An economic consultant who has been active in banking for sixty years, he proceeds to relate in some detail the progress of gold through the financial markets of the world. One reflects with interest on his observation that, aside from an insubstantial number of shipwrecks, almost none of the gold that sat in the coffers of the ancient kings and in the homes of wealthy citizens has been lost. Having been melted down and transformed, it is still feeding the international markets and is constantly being added to, through mining and gold rushes. From the dawn of time to about 1500, the amount of gold known to Europe and Asia was about two meters squared. Now it is some twenty times larger, which is a little or a lot, depending upon your perspective.

The most informative part of Bernstein's book concerns the evolution of monetary policy since the creation of the Bank of England in 1694 and the establishment of gold's preeminence, thanks to the exertions of men like John Locke and Isaac Newton. From there we are led through the bullion shortages of the Napoleonic wars and the creation of the international gold standard of 1870, which remained in force until the beginning of World War I. Mr. Bernstein discusses as well the Bretton Woods Agreement, which granted monetary pre-eminence to the United States, much to the displeasure of the French, as well as the momentous decision of Richard Nixon to take America off the gold standard in 1971.

At times, Bernstein's narrative is a little difficult to follow for those of us who are not deeply versed in monetary policy. But even with that reservation, the reader will find that the general thrust of his story is clear enough. As a result, it is unlikely that anyone who admires gold or uses it in any way will read this book without gaining a greatly enhanced perspective on this mysterious metal. ■

James Gardner is the art critic for *The New York Post* and the *National Review*.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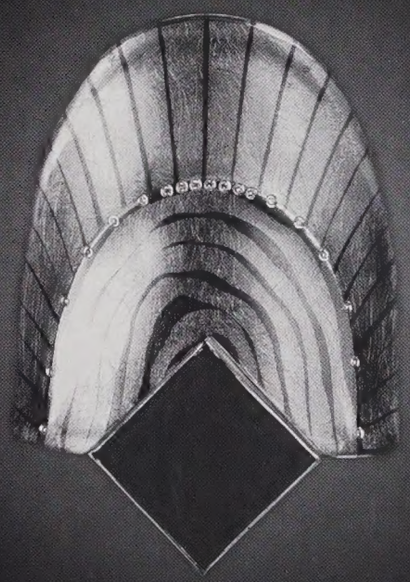

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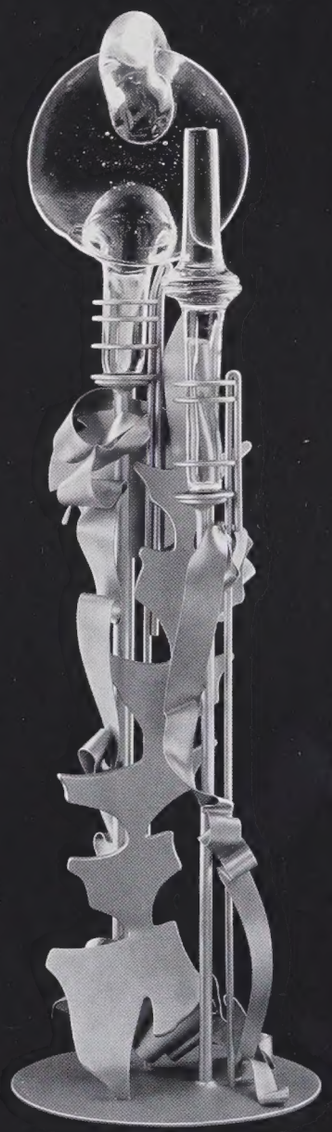

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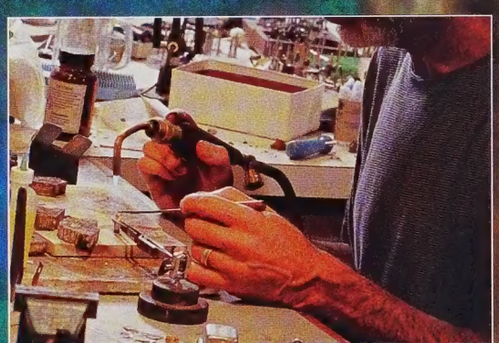

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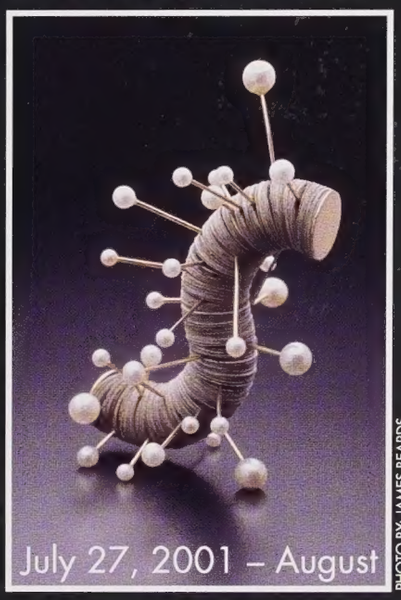

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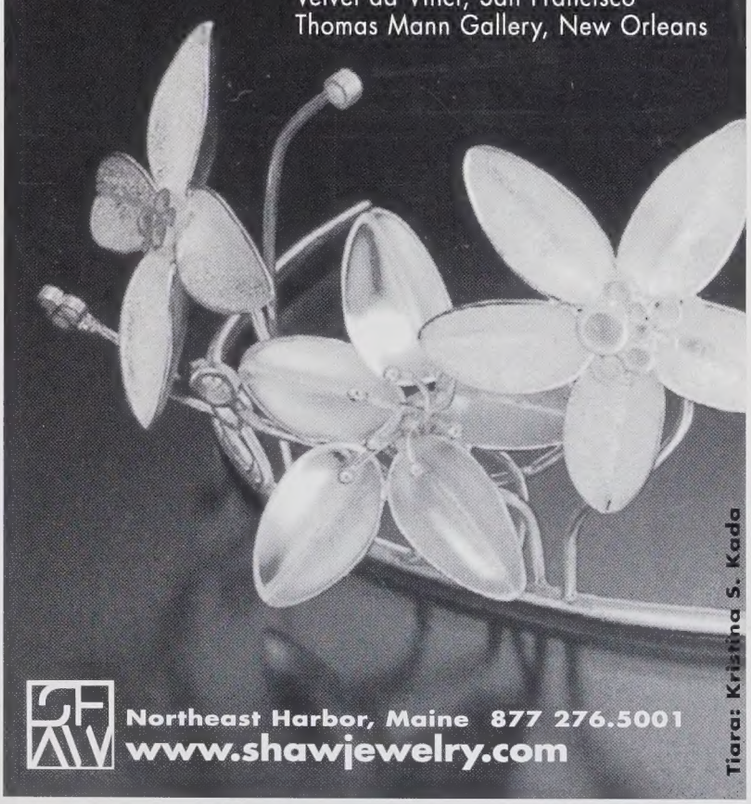

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OBSERVATIONS

the work of Chris Irick

above
Obscured Escape, 1994
copper, brass, silver, glass
20 x 1 1/2 x 1"

by **Tacey Rosolowski**

With forms drawn from architecture, scientific equipment, and fine watchcraft, Chris Irick creates pendants and containers that address the power of small objects to engineer psychic states. Irick's work is influenced by Gaston Bachelard's investigations into "spatial metaphors for the unconscious and processes of self-discovery." Designed for solitary contemplation, her pieces are discovered layer by layer, often a disquieting process.

Obscured Escape invites us to peer through a grille, then arrests our eye in a murky watery surface. *Catacomb* is a faceted vessel that might contain herbs or perfume. The cover opens to reveal a world seemingly reconfigured on a monumental scale: a chamber extends before us with no comforting suggestion of an end. *Contained* has the look of a nineteenth-century scientific instrument, but inside we find a cavity fitted with a cast metal sack. Instead of extending our vision, it withholds knowledge, leaving us uneasy.

Western art has long been fascinated with the opposition between surface and depth: art generally penetrates superficial illusion in order to reach an interior font of authentic expression. Irick's worlds-within-mechanical-worlds toy skillfully with this opposition. Her pieces suspend us between surfaces and depths that are equally revelatory and enigmatic. We come away with no definitive discovery or resolution but stay fixed in liminal spaces where scales of perception shift and references to the real are refashioned as a dark and private poetics of anxiety.

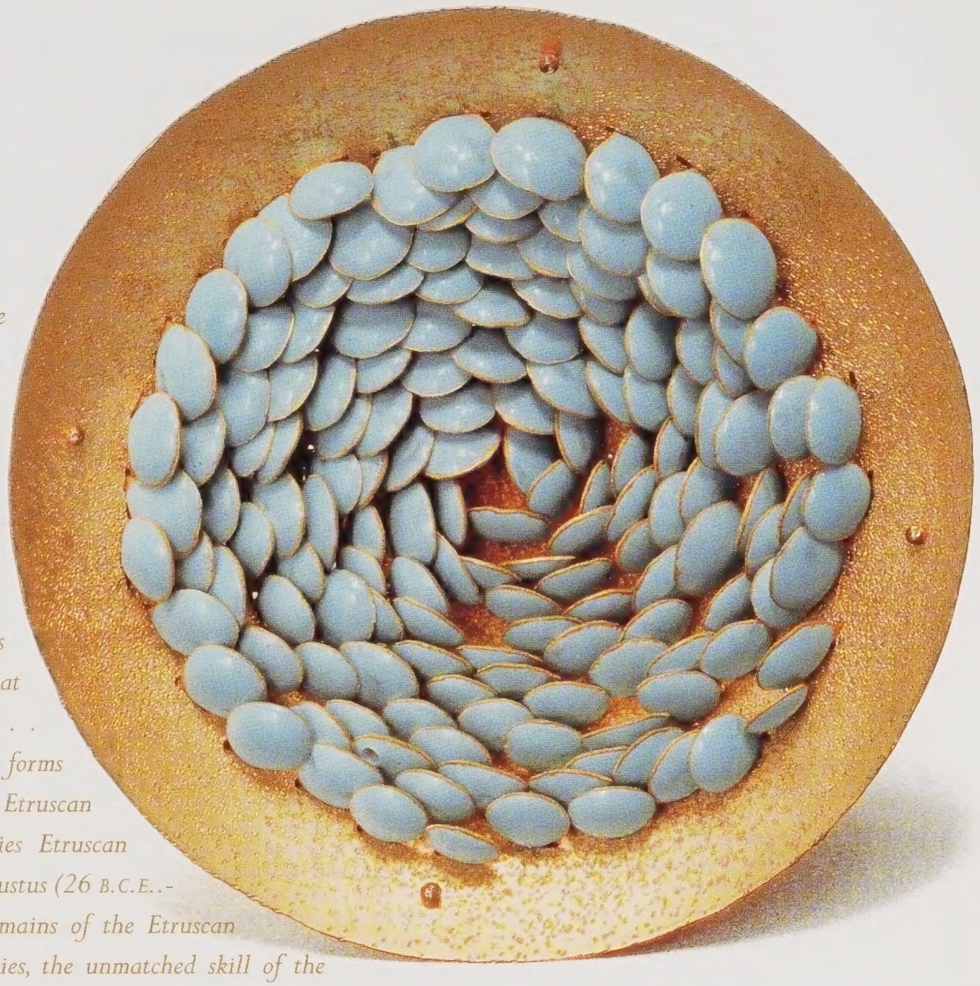
left
Labyrinth, 1997
copper, silver, watch crystal,
steel, cable
$2\ 1/2 \times 2\ 1/2 \times 2"$

below left
Contained, 1996
copper, brass, hydrostone,
silver
$12 \times 2\ 1/2 \times 1"$

below right
Catacomb, 1998
copper, brass, silver, latex
$2 \times 1\ 1/5 \times 1\ 1/2"$

Smoke and Fire in Gold: Giovanni Corvaja and Jacqueline Ryan

by Marjorie Simon



Shortly after the Trojan Wars, about 1000 B.C.E., the Etruscans came west from Asia Minor and settled in what is now Tuscany in central Italy. Between 1000 and 400 B.C.E. they dominated the Po Valley. Mediterranean trade brought gold from Crete, and Greek artisans found the Etruscans to be able collaborators in developing gold work as yet unrivaled in the old or new world. "Throughout the sixth century [B.C.E.] a profusion of gold work exceeds in technical cunning and in actual beauty anything that the Hellenic artist could produce at this time. . . . [G]ranulation constitutes one of the most specialized forms of technique, if not an actual invention, of the Etruscan goldsmith."[1] Unfortunately, within a few centuries Etruscan refinement had passed, and by the reign of Caesar Augustus (26 B.C.E.–14 C.E.) the golden age of Rome included only remains of the Etruscan influence on jewelry. Throughout succeeding centuries, the unmatched skill of the Etruscan and Greek goldsmiths was gradually absorbed by the Roman Empire, until, in the Christian era and ever since, Italian goldsmiths have set the standard of European craftsmanship. In fact, the hegemony of Italian goldsmithing may be traced to this pre-Christian confluence of East and West. As late as the Italian Renaissance, it was common for artists and sculptors such as Donatello, Brunelleschi, and Ghiberti to be students of goldsmithing. And although little remains of his magnificent works, Benvenuto Cellini, the ur-goldsmith of the Renaissance, brought the goldsmith's art to France, where it was met with the medieval art of enameling. Meanwhile, in the British Isles, when the Roman soldiers arrived there in the first century C.E., they found the Celts were using champleve enamel on their shields, swords, and horses' accoutrements. Later, medieval ornamentation used white or blue opaque enamel on gold carved and cast forms. "The Dunstable Swan Jewel, an example of opaque white enamel over gold, [was] probably made by a London goldsmith."[2]

Giovanni Corvaja, a native of Padua, belongs to the Italian artisanal tradition; his wife, the English artist Jacqueline Ryan, shares lineage with a broad range of creative influences. They met in 1990 as students at the Royal College of Art in London, subsequently moving to Padua and setting up their studio. Married in 1998, Corvaja and Ryan define themselves as a couple who collaborate in life, though not in the actual pieces they make. Individually and together, their work may be understood within the context of cultural history, its own technical and aesthetic development, and their collaboration and personal narrative.

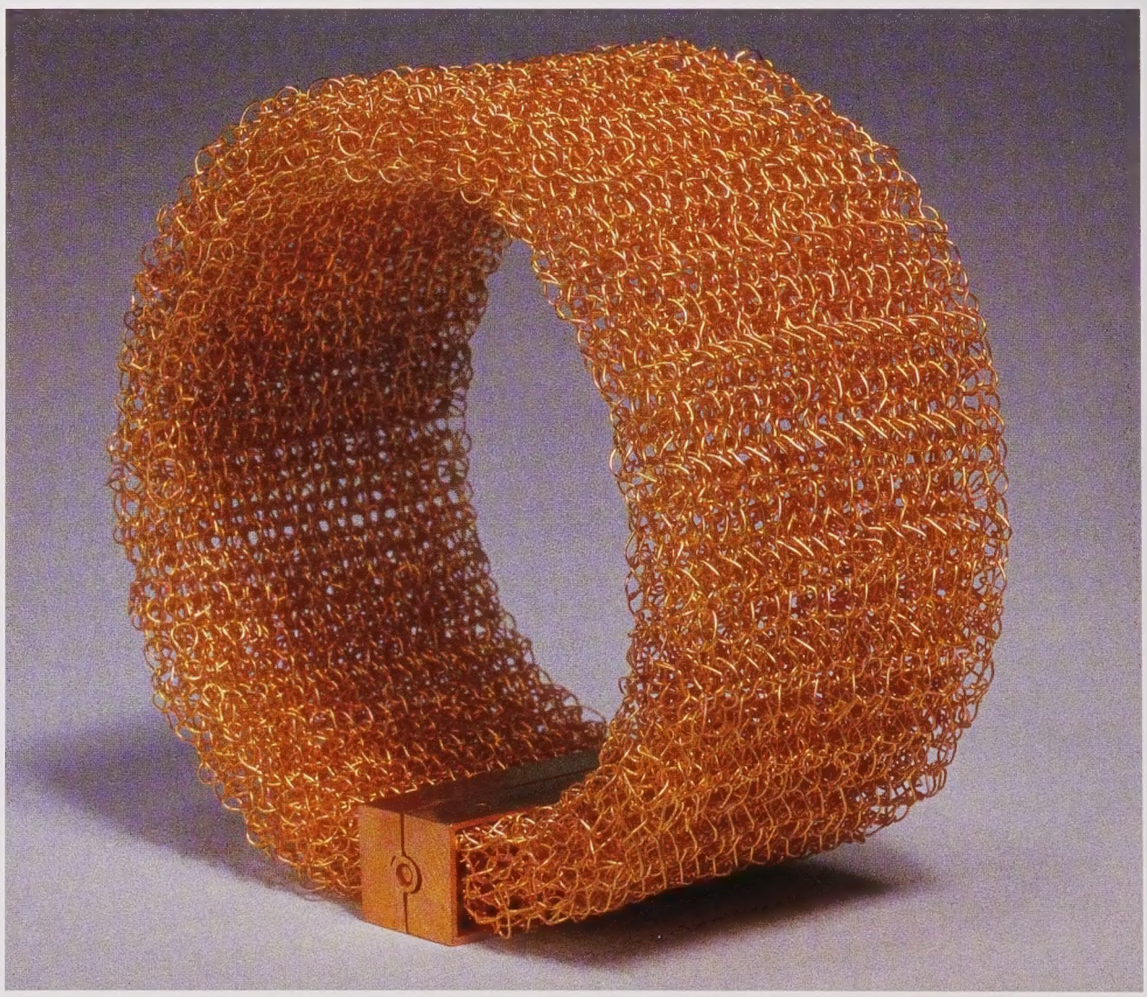
above
Jacqueline Ryan
Brooch, 1996
18k gold, enamel
2" diam.

left
Giovanni Corvaja
Brooch, 1998
18k gold, black palladium
2 5/8" diam.
Photo: Karen Bell

When Arline Fisch introduced the designs of contemporary Italian goldsmiths to the reading public a dozen years ago, Giovanni Corvaja was still a teenager.[3] But he was already enrolled in the famed Pietro Selvatico School of Art in Padua (The State Institute of Art), then under the leadership of master goldsmith Francesco Pavan, who had been a student of the great Mario Pinton. Like his German contemporary of the postwar generation Hermann Jünger, Pinton contributed to the development of a new European aesthetic, one that simultaneously honored millennia of Italian goldwork and broke new ground in art jewelry. "The primary characteristics of this jewelry are bold simplicity of form, classical proportion, perfection of construction and finesse of surface texture and finish—a machine precision accomplished by hand."[4] Regardless of trends elsewhere in Europe, "in Padua particularly a relaxed and elegant abstract style has developed in lustrous matt gold, almost always without gemstones."[5]

Corvaja's approach to material and technique can be seen to have its roots in Pinton's example: fine gold work, a sensual luxuriousness of surface, and an aesthetic that focuses on the adornment of a woman's body and clothing in elegant refinement. The geometric grid and use of line that organizes the surface of a 1986 brooch by Pinton seems to have been taken up by Corvaja as a structural framework for his impossibly airy gold wire, as if the substrate has been etched away, leaving just the skeleton behind. To this Corvaja has added his own textilelike sensibility, blurring boundaries between two media that might otherwise seem irreconcilable.

Corvaja does not consciously reference the ancient gold motifs or constructions of his native region. Yet it does him no disservice to view his work against the backdrop of centuries-old familiarity with fine goldsmithing. It is not entirely far-fetched to suggest he has an unconscious memory of gold, despite the fact that his parents are chemists, and not goldsmiths. Evidently showing early promise, he



Giovanni Corvaja
Bracelet, 1996
18k gold
3 x 1 1/2"

began as a young teenager to study with Pavan. The scientific milieu of his childhood and family environment is evident in the way he constructs his brooches, which look similar to DNA ladders or other subatomic structures, much like the models his father built and showed around the house. Corvaja's mother had taught him to knit, and in school he also became interested in the girls' weaving classes. He adapted knitting and weaving techniques to his own ends, and his early works included three-dimensional knitting in gold and silver. Using as many as ten needles on a side, he was able to "create a structure which is paradoxically both very light and transparent (sponge-like) yet very strong and resilient."[6] He has redefined the notion of line into volume, using as much as 350 meters of wire in a single knitted bracelet. Eventually he created a loom to make woven gold as well. Working finer than most other woven or knitted gold jewelry, Corvaja appears to subvert the medium. Even compared with the elegant patterns of Mary Lee Hu, Corvaja's work leaps into space, as if a Lenore Tawney textile was crossed with a Sol Lewitt grid.

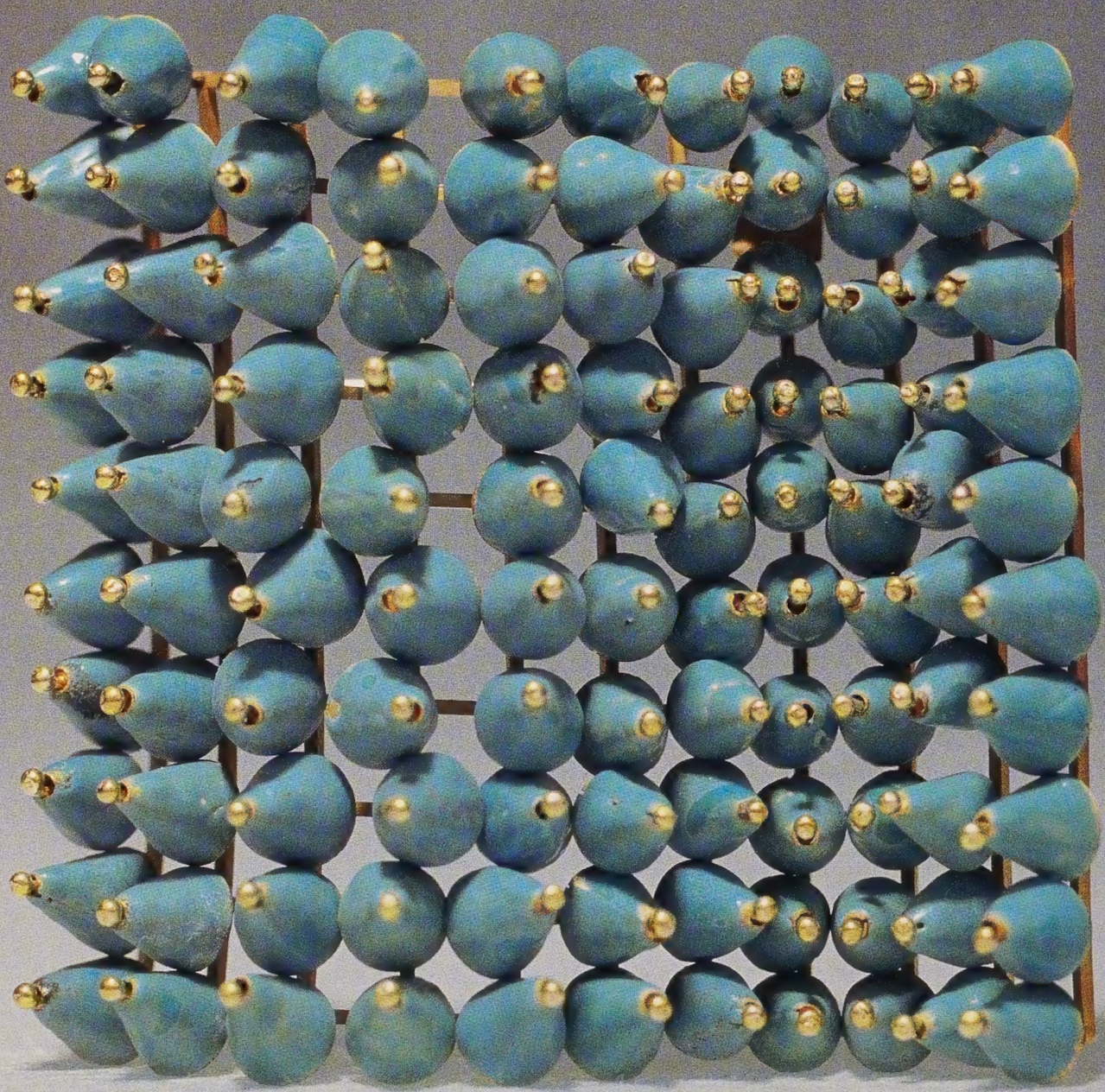
Giovanni Corvaja
Bracelet, 1997
22k gold and niello
3 x 3"

Studying Etruscan techniques, some of which were not understood until the last century, enabled Corvaja to use granulation at will, not to replicate ancient designs, but to animate his own constructions.

It is almost impossible to overstate the monumentality of structure and concept contained in one of Corvaja's brooches. He shows that monumental ideas may be expressed in a small format, without actually challenging the conventional notion of adornment. The brooches, while visually dense and structurally complex, may be worn on any lapel. Corvaja became interested in "exploring structures made out of wire" after seeing a picture of scaffolding in China in *National Geographic*, which reminded him of the stabilizing diagonal as an organizing principle. After all, what is a square but two triangles? This led to a brooch of dense tiny squares of forged and soldered wire, contained by a rigid frame of gold supports. Corvaja's work combines an investigation of structure on a deep molecular level, using a variety of metals, while pushing the limits of gold's ductility. Even when exploring the fiber possibilities of wire, he continues to expose the structure, until it becomes the object, thereby linking architecture and textiles. The supporting warp disappears, the way that struts of a suspension bridge "disappear" in the eye's perception of an unbroken whole.

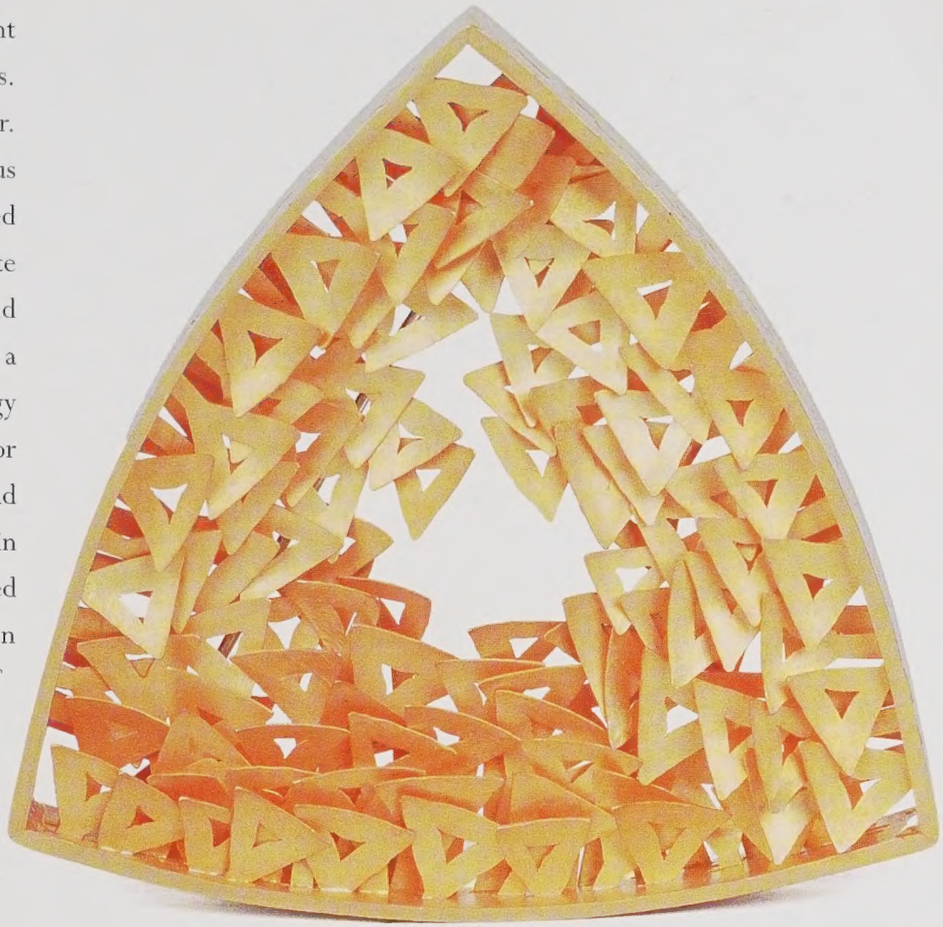
The Paduan school stressed technique and a respect for the unique properties and characteristics of materials. Corvaja's obsession with technique goes beyond what he learned in school, however, and his deep understanding of materials affects his choices for fabrication. The more you know about metalworking, the more astonishing Corvaja's work becomes. One of his bracelets took months to fabricate and used 28,000 balls, many colored with niello. When Corvaja says "technique is language," he refers to the power of expressing oneself with a rich technical vocabulary. Studying Etruscan techniques, some of which were not understood until the last century, enabled Corvaja to use

Her familiarity with petal clusters, leaves, sticks, burrs, conifers, and seeds can be seen in her sketches and models, which replicate the profusion of possible forms, rather than realistically portray existing plants.



granulation at will, not to replicate ancient designs, but to animate his own constructions. Some are like fringe, others like a hairy sweater. To make one body of work featuring numerous hairlike threads of gold or platinum, each beaded at the end, he had a special diamond drawplate made. The combined lattice structure and matted gold thread creates the effect of finding a spider's egg in the rafters of a barn. A spongy mass of gold felt may be dotted with niello or palladium elements for contrast in form and color. More than two dozen gold alloys used in a single piece create a subtle wave of blended color like a golden sunset. Another innovation involved repeatedly threading a number of wires through a single hole and fusing the assembly from behind into one bead. The result is like holding a waving bunch of fiber-optic rods with a shimmering surface that reflects light from a myriad quivering spheres.

Both Corvaja and Ryan use repetition effectively. But whereas Corvaja exposes the molecular structure of things, Ryan lingers just below the threshold of the naked eye, as if with a magnifying glass, revealing the organizing principles in nature. Corvaja's single-minded pursuit of gold contrasts with Ryan's more eclectic art background in various media. And their educational training, although different from each other, also contrasts with an American system that requires neither a long apprenticeship leading to technical mastery nor the mechanics of designing for production. Ryan has traditionally dealt with nature motifs drawn from direct observation, as well as with historical references to Egyptian jewelry. Her signature work of the past decade is lively, colorful, and full of moving parts; leaves flutter and twist on their stems, and cotyledons overlap each other. She is one of the few jewelers using enamel in nontraditional ways, so that her source of color is not restricted to stones. In fact, Ryan's early work was characterized by a playful and colorful spontaneity made possible by fabricating with aluminum.



above
Jacqueline Ryan
Brooch, 1999
18k gold
2 1/2 x 2 1/2"
Photo: Karen Bell

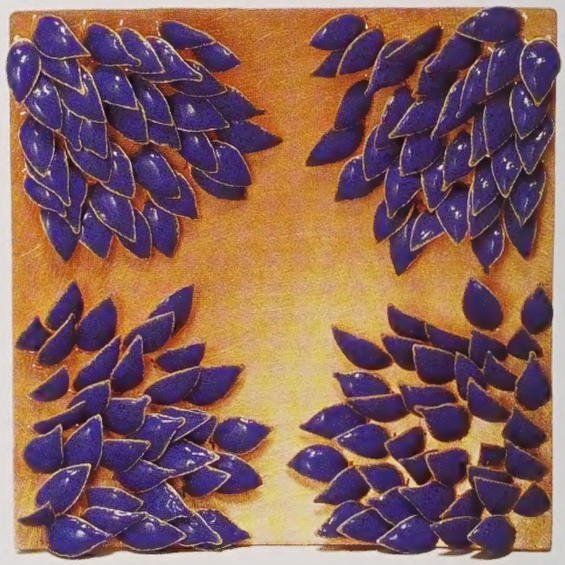
opposite
Jacqueline Ryan
Brooch, 1998
18k gold, enamel
2 1/4 x 2 1/4"

Jacqueline Ryan grew up far from the traditions of Etruscan gold, in a small town near Epping Forest, in northeast London. It might be said that she was imprinted from an early age with the shapes and forms of nature, collecting insects, tracking animals, and gathering stones on regular walks through the forest in all seasons of the year. This natural proclivity was reinforced by drawing requirements at school. She observes nature much like turn-of-the-century photographer Karl Blossfeldt, who isolated the forms of ordinary plants. Her drawings and constructions reveal a naturalist's eye, peering deep down among the leaf mold, mushrooms, and fallen branches. Like other jewelers who draw from nature, such as Sharon Church and Norwegian artist Liv Blåvarp, she can convey essential "leafness" without resorting to representational details. Her familiarity with petal clusters, leaves, sticks, burrs, conifers, and seeds can be seen in her sketches and models, which replicate the profusion of possible forms, rather than realistically portray existing plants. Her jewelry seems connected to South

American feather headdresses or necklaces of sharks' teeth and beetle wings. Fluttering blue leaves recall lapis lazuli inlays, and bobbling turquoise cones look backward to Egypt and forward to European design. Even more revealing than her precise but lively drawings, brought to life by the occasional color wash, is the record of Ryan's paper models. She even handles sheet gold like paper. In one brooch, pierced pinnate ferns rise up from the forest floor, creating shadows and highlights as if winking in dappled sunlight. Floral references might be as ordinary as a dandelion or as grandiose as a sunflower.

To appreciate Ryan's use of vitreous enamel, one need only think of the many sentimental and trite subjects rendered in cloisonné. It is true that there is much exciting new enamelwork being done in Europe and Scandinavia, such as that of Bettina Dittlmann in Germany and Synnøve Korssjøen in Norway. For a thousand years England has had a strong tradition and understanding of enamel, commercially culminating in the nineteenth-century Battersea enameled snuffboxes and a still vital industry of enamel-on-steel signage. It is this tradition that serves as Ryan's foundation and point of departure. Unlike other sources of color such as acrylic resins, the great beauty of enamel is that it is glass, a material born of sand and fire, which carries its own mythology. Many enamelists claim they like enamel for its paintlike quality, but Ryan loves "the quality of glass . . . and finds[s] it a beautiful material to work with in combination with gold. It allows for great color possibilities which . . . are impossible in any other medium. It is both warm and cold, hard and soft, depending on how it is used." Despite the heyday of enameled costume jewelry derivative of Tiffany and Cartier designs, it was considered ludicrous or wasteful to use opaque enamel on gold. Conventional wisdom dictated that gold should gleam through transparent layers of color, and opaque enamel covers up the surface. But Ryan has shown that judicious placement of opaque glass marries well with gold, particularly when given equal visual or emotional weight. Ryan's gold petals and leaves do more than simply frame the enameled color, and the glass stands up to the gold in material equivalence.

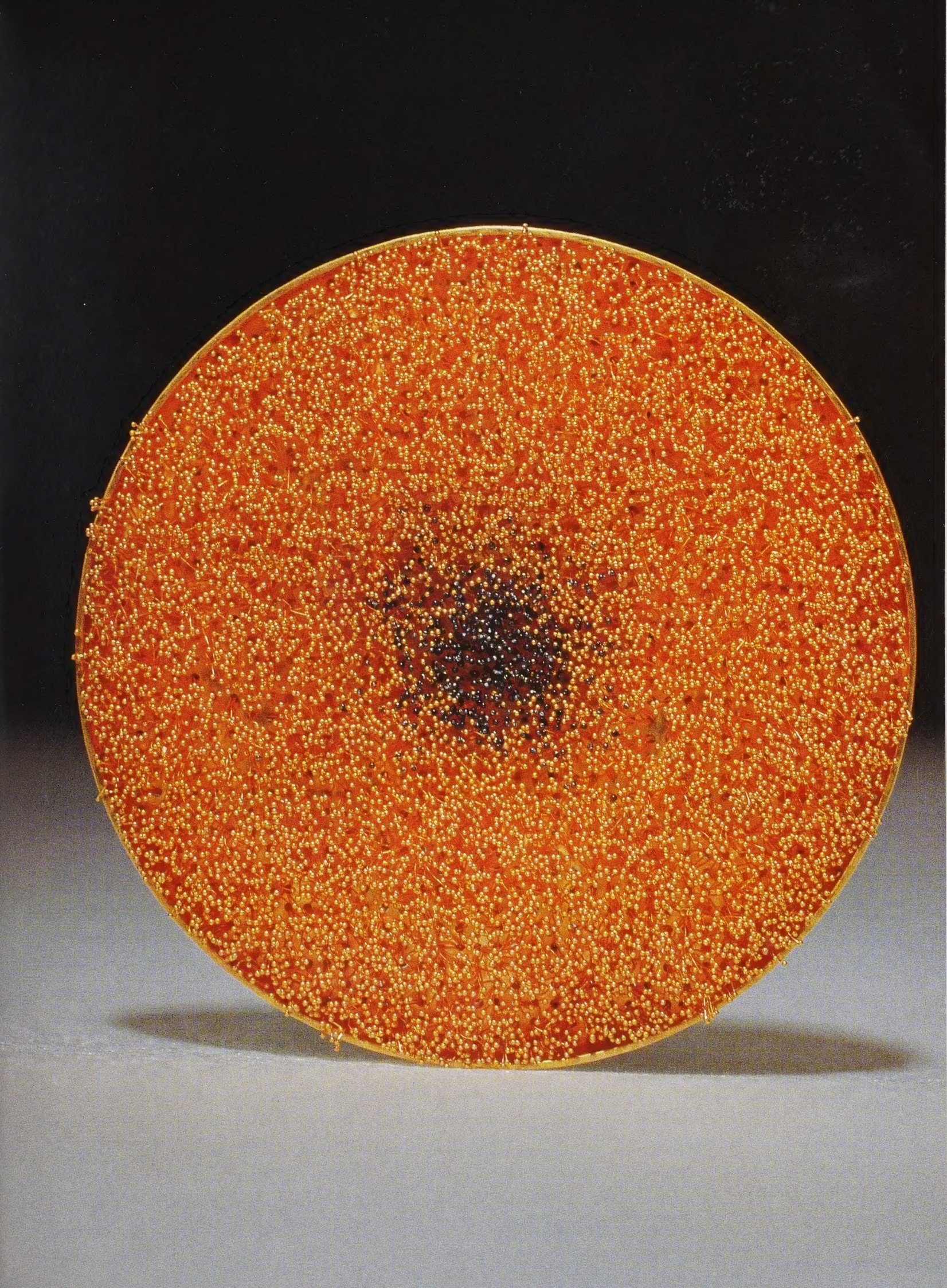
> In a way, Corvaja and Ryan are like toddlers engaged in parallel play rather than what we think of as true collaborators. Actually they are more like creative partners.

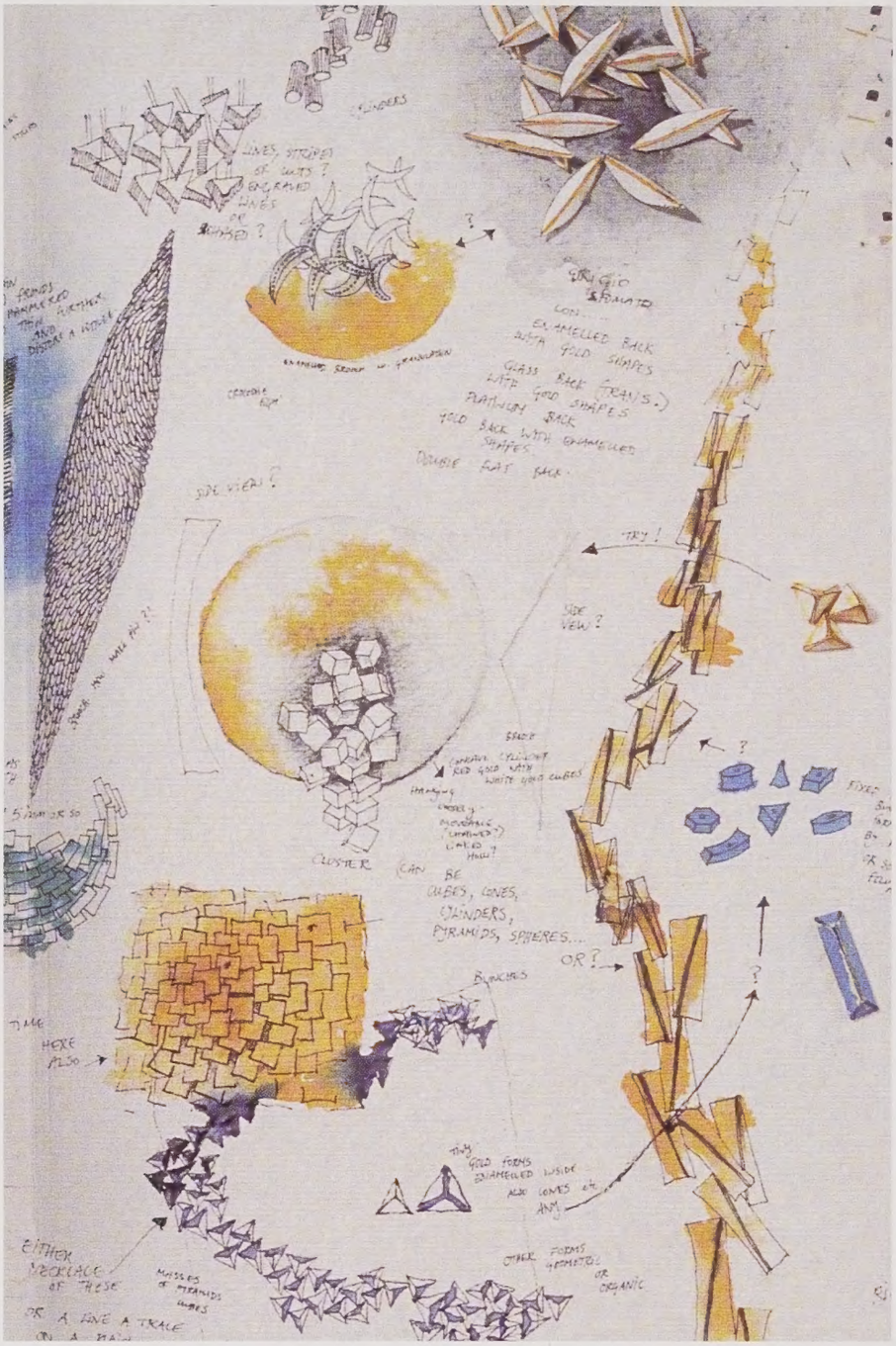


above right
Jacqueline Ryan
Brooch, 1996
18k gold, enamel
2 1/4 x 2 1/4"

opposite
Giovanni Corvaja
Brooch, 1997
22k gold and niello
2 1/2" diam.

Both Corvaja and Ryan had to leave their formative school environments in order to develop the singular vocabulary that now characterizes their work. Coming to Padua meant significant changes for Ryan, particularly for her handling of materials. It is harder to see what Corvaja gained from his English education, other than his very significant collaboration with Ryan. Of course, even when one has a strong sense of place, it is valuable to travel and leave the familiar before returning home again. In going to England, Corvaja entered a world where design and "batch production" reigned.





above left
Jacqueline Ryan
Process Notes

above right
Jacqueline Ryan
Pendant, 1996
18k gold, enamel
2 3/8"

Although he never adopted this way of working, he acknowledges that leaving Padua was necessary for his own growth as an artist. When Ryan came to Padua, on the other hand, she was introduced to a world of gold and of sensitivity to materials that had been developed over millennia. Her keen eye for the articulation of natural forms has been enriched by the influence of Pinton, Pavan, and the Paduan school, as much as her use of enamel has enriched their traditional treatment of gold. It appears to an outsider that Corvaja's and Ryan's work is beginning to look somewhat alike. They remain confident, however, that their fundamentally different ways of looking at the world will insure their individuality. They explain that Corvaja's ideas "formulate in his mind whilst he works and handles tools and material. [H]e does not use drawing as a tool for development . . . and his approach is quite scientific." Ryan, on the other hand, is "more poetic, [and] develops ideas almost exclusively in sketchbooks packed with ideas, drawings from nature, and subsequent paper models before moving on to working with the material."

So what exactly is the nature of their collaboration? There are many different ways to collaborate: the quilting bee, filmmaking, and glass blowing are all collaborative endeavors. There is the episodic, project-oriented

collaboration ("Double Vision," SNAG exhibition, 1995) and the habitual collaborators (Gilbert and George, the Starn twins). Sometimes the collaboration yields results greater than either party is capable of achieving alone: think of Gilbert without Sullivan, McCartney without Lennon, or Mastroianni without Fellini. Sometimes there is just a confluence of interest, such as Picasso and Braque in 1908–09, a period of intense interaction when their work is virtually indistinguishable. Famous creative couples often fall into a pattern of mentor (older, male) and acolyte (younger, female) or creator (established, male) and muse (female).[7] The literature contains few examples of people like those we might actually know: pairs of artists whose life and work intersect, are interdependent, or even nourish each other. Perhaps because of the lower profile of crafts, where the stakes are not as high as in fine art, it is possible to have real collaboration among couples. Think of Hiroko and Gene Pijanowski, Michael and Maureen Banner, Jeff and Susan Wise, and Dave and Roberta Williamson.

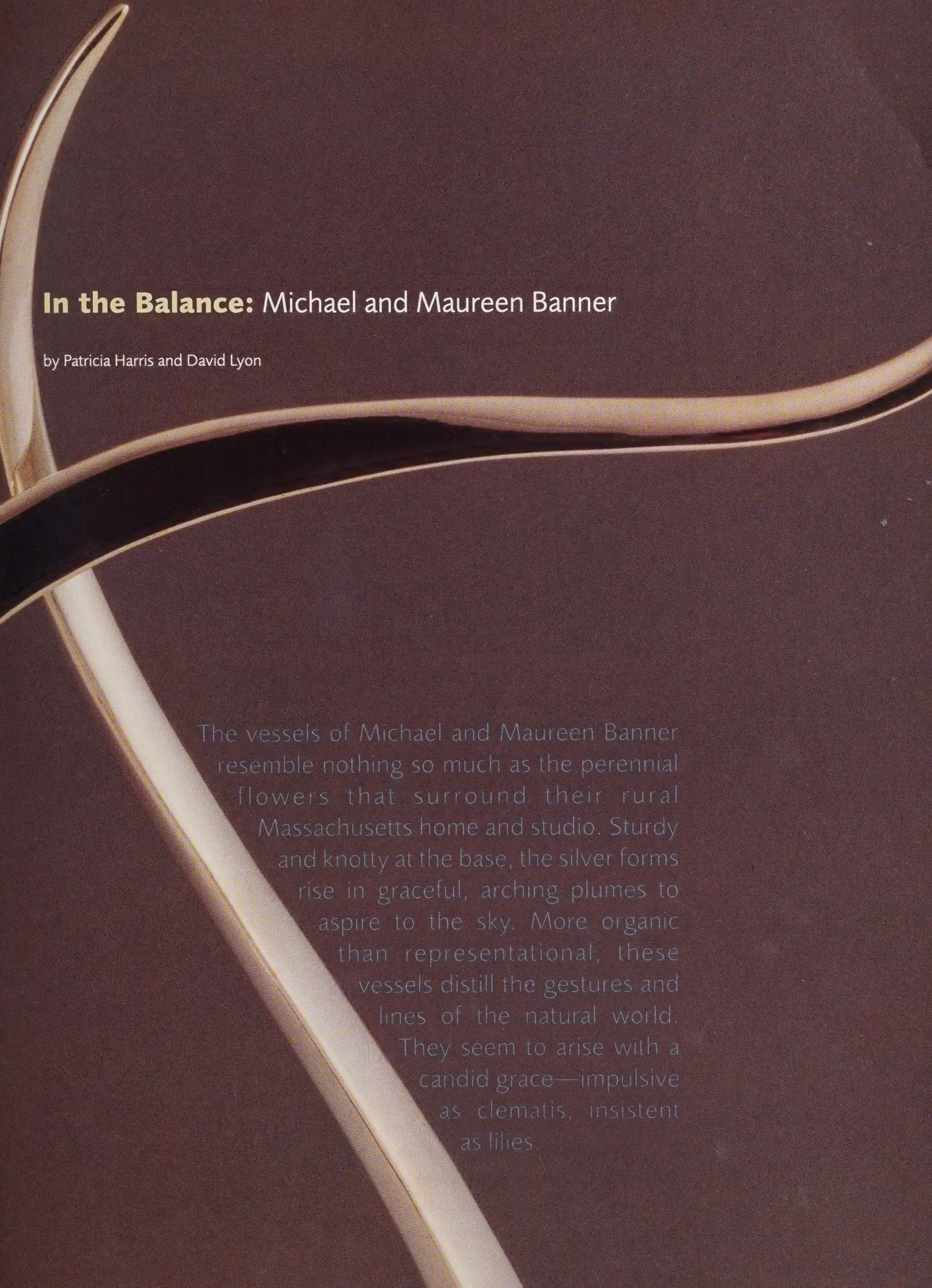
In a way, Corvaja and Ryan are like toddlers engaged in parallel play rather than what we think of as true collaborators. Actually they are more like creative partners. They share a sense of mission, but it has to do with their life together, and with what they each demand from their art. They do not have assistants, and they do not work on each other's pieces, so in a way they can hardly be said to collaborate at all. But they are adamant about their interconnectedness and they insist on exhibiting together. "We do actually collaborate in the sense that we have some philosophies or ideals in common. . . . More practically, we share the duties of running a business together [and] the presentation of our works." Intimately involved in each other's work, they appreciate their differences and celebrate their unity. They go to the studio together each morning and share a work space throughout the day. In addition to the creative boost that comes from spending their time with someone who shares their worldview, Corvaja and Ryan reinforce their commitment to doing one-of-a-kind pieces and help resist the temptation to teach or do production work that would compromise their mission. They are fortunate to be so young and to maintain a high level of autonomy and authenticity. Dealing only with galleries, they rarely meet their elite clients, and they do not take commissions. To do so would undermine the flow of their own explorations, which they believe to be essential to their entire way of working. Corvaja can literally spend months on a single piece or on developing a tool or machine with which to experiment. Ryan also takes a long time drawing and developing her models. They both cherish this privilege and work hard to protect it.

Giovanni Corvaja has emerged as a new young maestro. His brilliantly constructed brooches reduce the scale of architecture without compromising its intent. He manages to combine the formal modernism of architecture with a loosely choreographed interior, like a steel window frame softened by a billowing curtain. Together with Jacqueline Ryan, he dares to suggest that size matters, but not in the usual way. It is the difference between the miniature and the intimate. Corvaja's and Ryan's resolutely unpostmodern commitment to beauty, to making, and to excellence leaves the two artists in a territory inhabited by few others. ■

Marjorie Simon is a metalsmith, a writer, and chairperson of the Editorial Advisory Committee of *Metalsmith*.

1 John Boardman, ed., *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. IV. The Persian Empire and the West, Cambridge University Press, 1964, pp. 425-26.
2 John Cherry, *Medieval Craftsmen: Goldsmiths*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Canada. 1992, p. 35.
3 Arline Fisch, "Goldsmiths of Veneto," *American Craft*, Dec. 1987–Jan 1988, Vol 47/ No. 6.
4 Fisch, op. cit. p. 40.
5 Clare Phillips, *Jewelry*, Thames and Hudson, New York, 1996, p. 207.
6 This and all other unattributed quotes are taken from personal communication with the artists.
7 For more on collaborative couples see *Significant Others: Creativity and Intimate Partnerships*, Eds. Whitney Chadwick and Isabelle de Courtivron, Thames and Hudson, 1993. See also *Team Spirit*, exhibition catalogue, Susan Sollins and Nina Castelli Sundell, curators, 1990.

"Rhino Horn" Teapot, 1998
sterling silver
height 14"
Photo: Paul Rocheleau



In the Balance: Michael and Maureen Banner

by Patricia Harris and David Lyon

The vessels of Michael and Maureen Banner resemble nothing so much as the perennial flowers that surround their rural Massachusetts home and studio. Sturdy and knotty at the base, the silver forms rise in graceful, arching plumes to aspire to the sky. More organic than representational, these vessels distill the gestures and lines of the natural world. They seem to arise with a candid grace—impulsive as clematis, insistent as lilies.

right
Tendril Handle Tea Set, 1992–93
sterling silver, walnut
height 10"
Photo: Paul Rocheleau

opposite
"Third Eye" Teapot, 1999
sterling silver
height 11"
Photo: Paul Rocheleau

Robert Frost once wrote that a poem's figure "begins in delight and ends in wisdom." The reverse could be said of a Banner teapot. It took time and patience for the Banners to achieve the sophistication of design and technique where art obviates the need for artifice. Their first pot was created around 1980, inspired by a teapot show at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Only Michael had formal training in holloware, acquired during a nine-month period at the Art Institute of Cleveland in the 1960s. When the couple turned their attention back to holloware, Michael remembers that it was "so much fun, starting the thought process all over." Fun was followed by hard work, as they spent most of the next decade perfecting their technical and design skills.

Both artists create individual work–Maureen does sculptural jewelry, while Michael makes small holloware such as candlesticks. At odd moments, they both assemble a line of production earrings. But their work and skills come together in the holloware tea and coffee services that have brought them numerous commissions and have garnered prizes at prestigious venues such as American Crafts Council and Smithsonian Craft Shows. Their vessels are in several public collections, including the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., as well as in numerous private collections. In 2000 they were recognized for their artistic accomplishments and high standards with an Excellence in Crafts award from the Boston-based Society of Arts and Crafts, the country's oldest non-profit craft organization.

Although their modernist design aesthetic makes no concessions to the rustic, sometimes Luddite nostalgia of the American Arts and Crafts movement, the Banners' coffee and tea services are a good match for the philosophy on which that movement was founded: that handmade objects should be simultaneously beautiful and useful in everyday life. The Banners take functionality very literally,

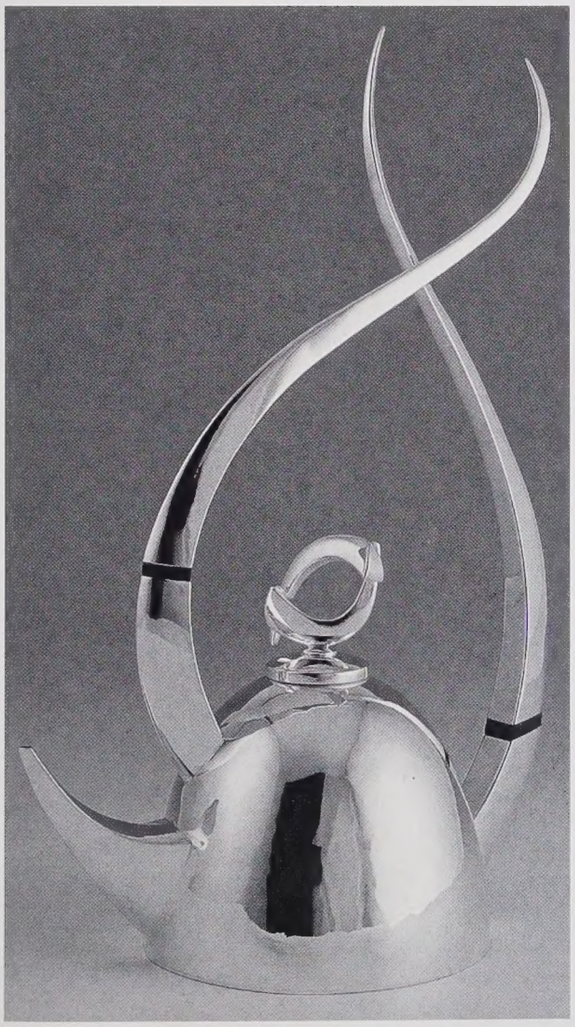
rejecting the idea that the vessel is merely a vestigial form in postmodern art. "I've always believed that crafts have to work," Michael says. "We make an art object–a piece of sculpture, really–that is also functional."

The Banner style represents an updated form of modernism. The shapes of their vessels and the vessel appendages make more than a passing nod to forms drawn from nature, but the shapes are stripped to the essential calculus of line and curve without the clutter of naturalistic representation or the postmodern accretion of referential detail. While the Banners mine these organic forms for beauty, they translate them into a lexicon specific to the properties of metal. As a result, Banner vessels possess the lucidity and precision–the elegance, if you will–of a mathematical proof, where grace lies in the economy of restraint and form highlights the mechanical possibilities of material.

The Banners' collaboration is something of a rarity, but it seems to come to them naturally. Their individual artistic strengths allow them to push each other to new levels, creating work that is truly a synthesis rather than merely a joint operation. They are best able to explain their

"We're drawn to round forms that move and flow."

"For us, the vessel has to be a body with warm, rounder shapes."



interaction in the two-level studio attached to their house, where they are surrounded by finished work mounted in display cases and by works-in-progress on shelves and counters. Watching them work together is akin to observing good tennis doubles players, who don't have to say a word about who will rush the net and who will prowl the back court. They just *know*, their intuitive collaboration honed by years of practice.

Although the Banners make many different holloware pieces, each suite of work depends on the design of the teapot or coffee server that will act as the centerpiece of the group. This dominating vessel sets the standards for scale, shape, spout, and handle. The auxiliary vessels–a sugar server and creamer, at minimum–are secondary elaborations on the visual theme set by the larger pot. And "pot" is an important term here. Maureen's mother was a potter, and when the couple were first married, Michael worked in metals and Maureen set up a pottery studio.

left
Coffee Service, 1999
sterling silver
height 16"
Photo: Paul Rocheleau

opposite
Tea Service and Tray "Renwick,"
1989–90
sterling silver, enamel
height 14"
Photo: Paul Rocheleau

Although they have collaborated in metals for many years now, clay continues to serve as a key form of inspiration for their hollowware. The flowing lines of the Banners' work bespeak the fluid dynamics of clay and water as much as the ductile properties of metal.

To begin a suite, the Banners sit down and discuss ideas and possibilities for the main vessel. Each piece tends to evolve from the one that went before it. A thousand alternatives present themselves as a design is being realized, and often a new design will represent the "road not taken" in making the previous piece. Both Michael and Maureen admit to a certain restlessness and even joke that complacency–or at least a willingness to repeat themselves –would probably be more financially rewarding. But they always strive for something different.

The complementary nature of their talents becomes evident when they launch a new project, as Michael waxes eloquent about how it should look, gesturing to carve out volumes of space. "I can visualize it in my mind," he says, "but I can't draw it." But Maureen can, and she picks up a sheaf of pencil sketches for a current project

A thousand alternatives present themselves as a design is being realized, and often a new design will represent the "road not taken" in making the previous piece.

right
Double Handle Teapot, 1989-91
sterling silver
height 10"
Photo: Paul Rocheleau

opposite page
Coffee Service "Philadelphia," 1991
sterling silver
height 10"
Photo: Paul Rocheleau

to demonstrate how the ideas evolve. As they talk, she translates and refines their vision on paper. Not surprisingly, the projected design is smooth, rounded, and as feminine as the belly of a Matisse odalisque. "We're drawn to round forms that move and flow," Michael says. "For us, the vessel has to be a body with warm, rounder shapes," Maureen elaborates. The influence of clay here is obvious. The body of the vessel that Maureen has sketched could easily be an Acoma Pueblo pot, slightly wider than tall. It hugs the earth–low and stable–quickly gravitating to equilibrium.

Maureen's sketch only serves as a point of departure, and at the next stage of their design the Banners translate a two-dimensional concept into a kind of a three-dimensional sketch. Michael cuts patterns from bristol board to rough out the pot's forms, "to get a good idea of the height and width, a sense of the volume, a feel for the angles." Building a vessel from many smaller pieces "lets you create almost any form you want," he explains. "If you were just raising the metal, you'd only get a round form." Although the fluidity of clay clearly influences their choice of line, fabrication allows the Banners to construct vessels with a complexity of crisp curves that play off each other and showcase the capacity of metal to define form. As Michael assembles bristol board, he and Maureen refine each piece of the construction to build a rough three-dimensional model. Eventually, the vessel begins to evolve and take on a life of its own.

Balance is the one overriding consideration that both Banners keep in mind as they develop each new design. How will the piece tip and pour and settle back to equipoise? How much leverage will the vessel form require? At what point above it will the fulcrum sit? Will it be the single fulcrum of one handle or the implied fulcrum of twin handles that require both hands to pour? "You have to think about balance from the beginning," Maureen says. The vessels not

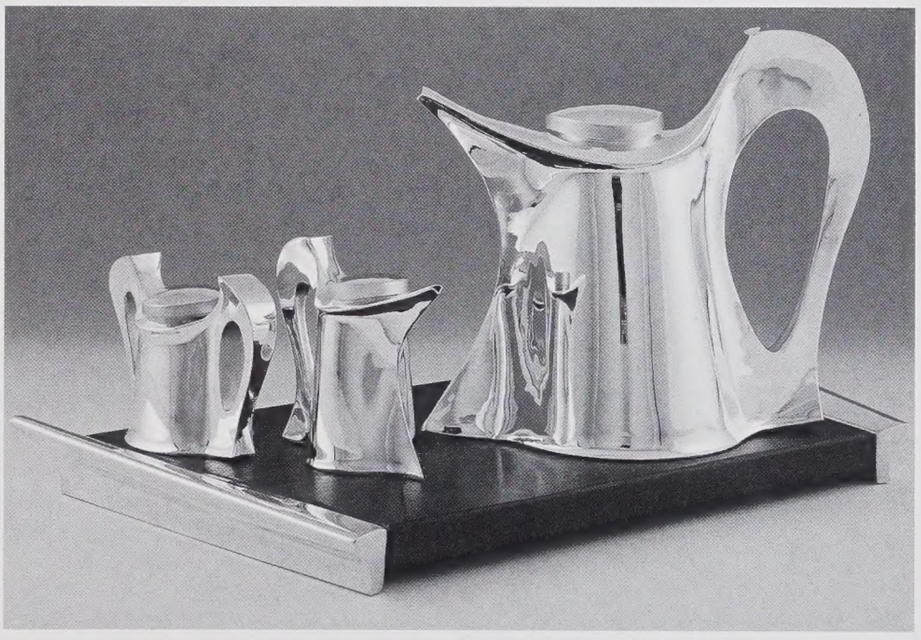
only hold and serve liquids, but they do so with the utmost ease and grace.

Once the couple is satisfied with the bristol board model, Michael cuts the metal from the board patterns. As a general rule, they use 18 gauge sheet silver–or heavier, if curves will require a lot of thinning. Michael then forms the metal at his workbench, typically beginning with a wooden mallet over a steel stake. Although he avoids striking with a metal hammer at this stage because it tends to harden the metal, he will sometimes resort to hammering near the edges to coax the silver into the sensuous curves that are a hallmark of the Banner style. He then meticulously files the edges by hand to create beveled seams that will lie completely flat on the finished vessel. The formed pieces are assembled and held together with binding wire—a task more easily said than done, since the metal moves when heated by soldering. When Michael has fluxed and soldered, he cleanses the vessel in an acid bath and files down the solder and cleans up the seams.

Once the body of the vessel has been created, "it's up for grabs," Maureen says. Her drawing skills come into play again, as she sketches possibilities ranging from cones to funnels to truncated pyramids to horns to breastlike dimples. Now working with the silver vessel, they cut bristol board shapes to consider how variant forms complement the pot. By the time the Banners settle on a spout, they have a fairly good idea what effect they will seek in the handle or handles. They follow a similar process: roughing out sketches on paper, then approximating the metal with bristol board. Every handle design incorporates their signature heat blocks—small inserts of wood (usually rosewood) that insulate the handle's grasp from the hot body of the vessel. It's a simple fillip of design, but a key one, pointing to their philosophical commitment to functionality.

The Banners create handles that are often as sinuously masculine as the vessels are voluptuously feminine. And they are not in the least shy about going to extremes. The volume of space carved out by the handles is usually at least equal to the vessel's displacement and may sometimes exceed it by a ratio of 3 to 2. This bold appropriation of space hints at how elements of nature inspire their forms. The Banners refer to one series of pots with elongated handles that curve back on themselves as "Tendrils." Another series with a pair of aggressive, slightly curved handles is "Rhino Horn," featuring rich enamel inlay suggestive of the streaked, mottled texture of horn. Michael learned the techniques of enameling at the Art Institute of Cleveland and taught Maureen. "She's the painter," he explains, "so she does all the enameling." Like the rosewood heat stops, discrete enameling supplies decorative accents to many pieces.

But it is the sheer elegance of the silver forms that takes the spotlight in all the Banners' vessels, whether they are shown as individual pieces or as parts of larger suites. Usually set on



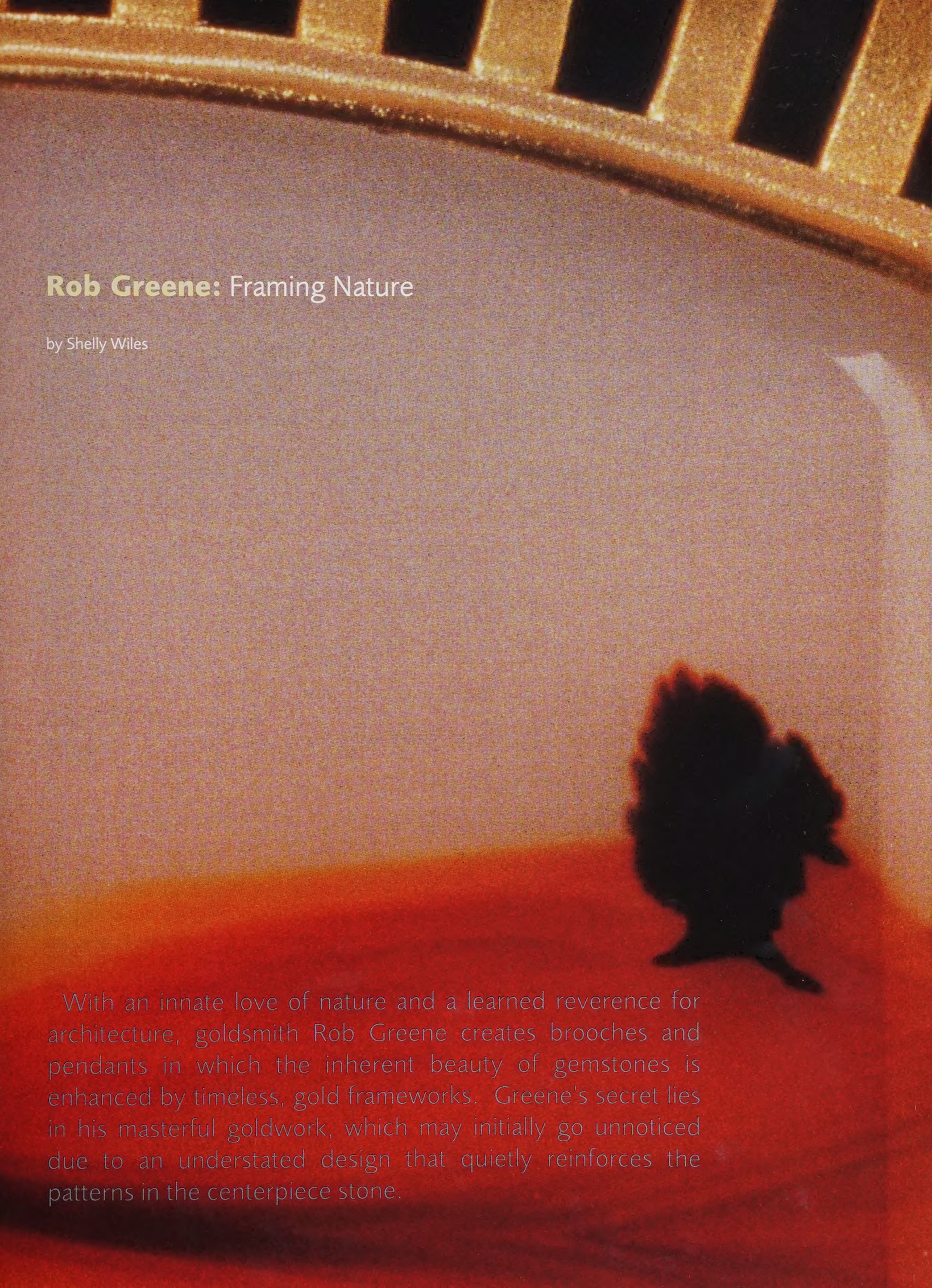
simple rosewood trays that Michael creates in his woodshop, the pieces seem to engage each other in conversational clusters, speaking in the rarified but eloquent tongue of modernism about the venerable traditions of tea and hospitality. ■

Patricia Harris and **David Lyon** are a writing team from Cambridge, Massachusetts.

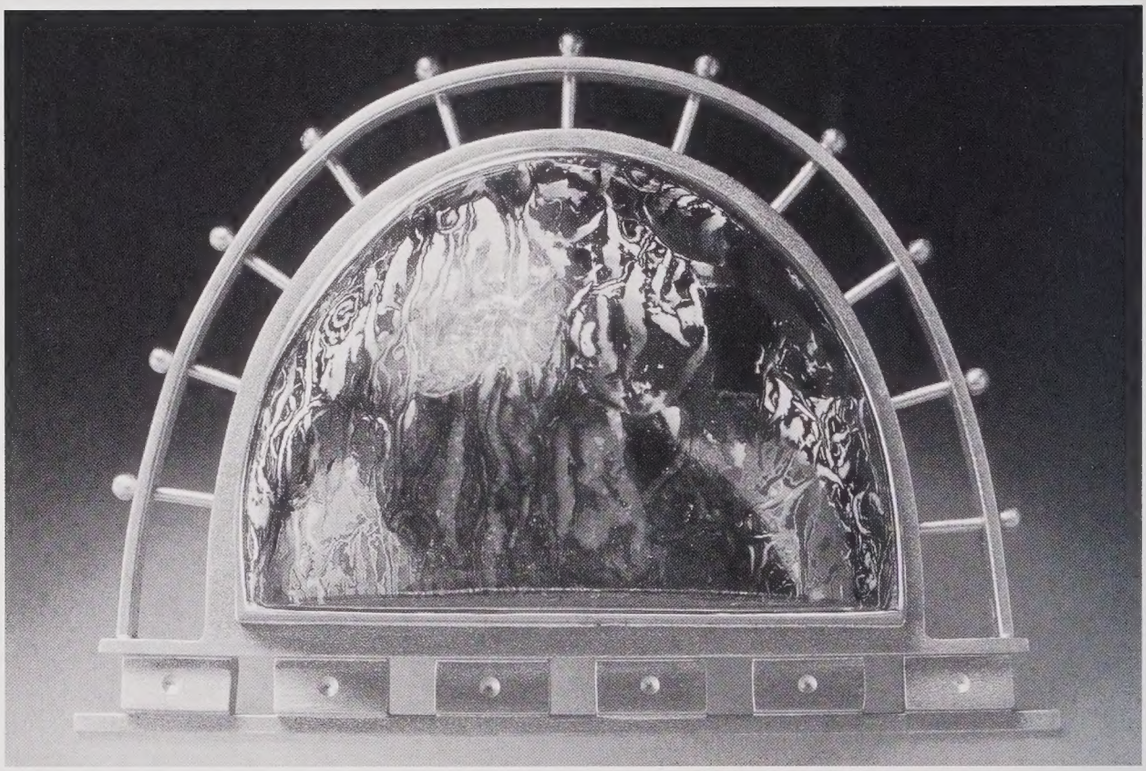
Brooch, 2000
Montana agate, pearl, fabricated
18k, 22k gold
2 x 1 1/4"
Photo: Glenn Moody

Rob Greene: Framing Nature

by Shelly Wiles



With an innate love of nature and a learned reverence for architecture, goldsmith Rob Greene creates brooches and pendants in which the inherent beauty of gemstones is enhanced by timeless, gold frameworks. Greene's secret lies in his masterful goldwork, which may initially go unnoticed due to an understated design that quietly reinforces the patterns in the centerpiece stone.



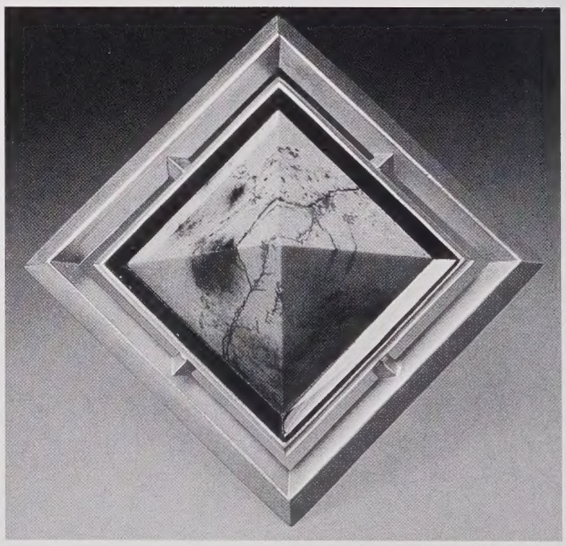
right
Brooch, 1999
boulder opal, fabricated 18k gold
$2\,1/2 \times 1\,7/8$"
Photo: Glenn Moody

below right
Brooch, 1999
serpentine, onyx, fabricated 18k gold
$1\,3/8 \times 1\,3/8$"
Photo: Glenn Moody

Despite his considerable talents, Greene did not originally aspire to become a goldsmith. Starting out as a psychology major, he also began making jewelry and small metal sculpture. However, spiritually drawn to the "back to the land" movement, Greene transferred to Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont, graduating with a double major in art and agriculture. Still seeking the frontier, he set out for New Brunswick to practice subsistence farming and found himself making jewelry during the harsh Canadian winters. Realizing that this was not his calling, after four years Greene moved back to Vermont and worked cutting silver for a supplier in Plainfield. He began selling his own jewelry–silver, mixed metals, acid-etched pieces, and lapidary work–at the Vermont Crafts Center in Middlebury, and soon it was being bought as fast as he could make it. A trip to the Southwest and the purchase of a grinder finally sealed his fate. After years of dancing around his craft, Greene turned his hobby into a full-time profession in 1975. "It wasn't a huge decision," he says matter-of-factly. "This was a media I could do and live off of, and not have to go back to school to do something totally different."

Greene's love of nature expanded his horizons and traveling became a means to study the natural world, collect rocks, and see architecture, another of his interests.

Greene's choice to become a designer of fine gold and gemstone jewelry, circuitous as it was, seems natural considering his childhood love of rock collecting. Born in New York City, Greene moved to New Jersey with his family when he was seven years old and remembers "hauling stones into the basement from the quarry behind my parents' house." He was encouraged in his interests by a neighbor who enjoyed taking him throughout New Jersey and New York to collect indigenous rocks. Greene's love of nature



expanded his horizons, and traveling became a means to study the natural world, collect rocks, and see architecture, another of his interests. Later, when Greene moved to New Brunswick, with no real architectural training he built his own house by hand–without power tools. Admittedly not enticed by book learning or conventional study, he has always regretted his lack of formal training: "If I had grown up in a different period, I might have studied architecture," he laments. Perhaps that is why many of his jewelry pieces have such a strong architectural quality. "Architecture is the ultimate in terms of making [something] with your hands; you know it's going to be huge, enduring. In terms of being a craftsman, it's as big as it gets."

Brooch, 2000
amethyst sage agate, fabricated 18k gold
2 x 1 1/2"
Photo: Glenn Moody

The architectural influences in Greene's work reflect a true mix of periods and cultures. One finds classical elements with strong, simple lines; designs reminiscent of the Art Deco and Arts and Crafts periods; and ornate pieces with influences from Eastern and Mediterranean cultures. For a brooch featuring a picturesque Montana agate, he created a frame that recalls a view through a Tuscan door or window. Bezeled in polished gold, the agate rests on a gold stylobate from which rise two columns supporting an arched, openwork lintel. Other pieces with architectural influences display repetitive elements—a stylistic treatment favored by Greene. "I've always liked borders, decorative edges, lintels, and lots of little repeated parts," he states. Greene chose an openwork arch resting on a frieze of metopes to emphasize the repetitive patterns in a boulder opal from Queensland and to liberate the stone from its solidity. The reverse of this brooch, as with many of his pieces, is expertly finished in true sculptural form. Greene conceives of his brooches as objects to be held and examined in the round, rather than just viewed frontally.

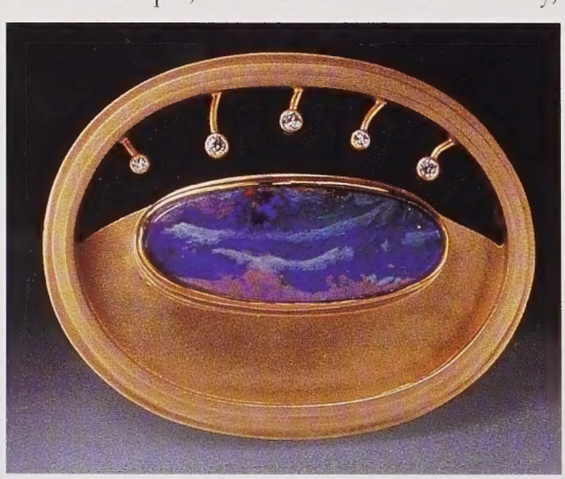
Even in brooches with elaborate goldwork, Greene maintains a commitment to clean, simple design. "It's a fine line between just accentuating and not overdoing it," he asserts. Restrained simplicity prevails in works where Greene provides the centerpiece stone with an elegant, spartan frame. One such deceptively simple brooch displays a pyramid of serpentine inlaid in onyx and framed by 18k gold. While the serpentine pyramidal projects, the onyx retracts at opposing angles; the stones are framed by four levels of recessed gold that further draw the eye into the piece. A simply mounted amethyst sage agate, which reminded Greene of a snowy day in Japan, is surrounded by a composition of curving lines like those favored in Asian architecture. The beauty of this piece, as in many of Greene's brooches, is enhanced through the use of sandblasted gold abutting the stone. Greene prefers a dull matte finish against the stone's color and shape, avoiding the reflection

right
Brooch, 2000
boulder opal, diamond, fabricated 18k, 22k gold
$2\ 1/4 \times 1\ 3/8"$
Photo: Glenn Moody

below right
Brooch, 2000
boulder opal, diamond, pearl, fabricated 18k, 22k gold
$2\ 1/4 \times 1\ 7/8"$
Photo: Glenn Moody

and glare of polished gold. "The gold should enhance, not detract from, the stone," he declares.

Hand-selecting stones is an essential part of Greene's creative process, and he often makes the annual trek to Tucson and other gem shows. As an entirely self-taught lapidary, Greene has put his time in the trenches, "grinding stuff to dust" through trial and error. But this experimentation has clearly paid off: his stones are masterfully reworked, and those pieces involving inlay and joins are almost seamless. The time and attention Greene spends on selecting his stones is apparent in the finished work. One of his great talents is the ability to echo the stone's natural patterns in his goldwork. "Sometimes I create the designs for my pins, but more often the stones dictate the style," he explains. The blue and green bands of a boulder opal, reminiscent of water or sky, demanded cutout patterns in the surrounding gold frame–perhaps waves, or more likely clouds and stars. A striking brooch of rutilated quartz with gold-colored acicular crystals reveals a tour de force of goldwork mimicking the natural formation of the stone. Angular overlapping strips of gold simultaneously encapsulate and expand the radiant stone and the gemstone's lightness is wonderfully mirrored by its frame.



Using a boulder opal that Greene describes as "more scenic than normal," he envisioned a distinct scene of pink clouds over purple mountains. In response to this visceral tug, Greene fabricated an eye-catching frame of two ovals: an outer border from which hang five small diamonds, reminiscent of stars; and a smaller one encircling the opal, which perches at the summit of a sandblasted gold "mountain." Both the bezeled vistalike stone and the conical shape of the mountain suggest a scene within a scene. A piece even more indicative of Greene's skill at achieving a symbiotic relationship between gold and stone mimics a natural, architectural structure. "The webby appearance of the Yowah boulder opal called for a form reminiscent of a spider web," says Greene. Appropriately, the stone's color goes from red to green within the frame, like the silken threads of a dew-covered web in the sun. Although the

hollow-backed brooch was largely cast, the finial-like balls and bezel were fabricated additions, representing a successful partnership of techniques.

While the majority of Greene's one-of-a-kind pieces are fabricated, casting does have its place in his work. "Some things that you can't do in [fabricated] metal you can do in wax," Greene affirms. He used to do all of the casting himself but now sends wax or metal models off to New York to be cast. Like many jewelers, Greene also does not make his own findings by hand. He prefers to spend his time considering things like wearability and weight. "I usually make things a little too heavy," he confides, and heavier brooches are sometimes adapted for dual use as pendants.

While faceted gemstones appear as accents in some of Greene's one-of-a-kind works, they are never used as centerpieces. This is not the case with his production line, which also employs 14k and 18k yellow, white, and pink gold. The production line does not offer brooches or other jewelry forms that Greene cannot reproduce. Pendants, rings, earrings, bracelets, and cufflinks appear in both cast and fabricated forms. Greene has slowed his production work as a whole, preferring to focus instead on one-of-a-kind pieces.

Whether it is one-of-a-kind or production work, it is hard to believe that such clean, simple, and well-balanced designs come out of Greene's chaotic dusty workshop. "It hasn't changed in twenty years from a temporary setup; things never get put back," he admits. "But if I had a neat space, work like this is the last thing I'd ever make." And that is part of the beauty of Greene's work. Amid a tangled mess of tools and materials, Greene works eight to ten hours per day, seven days a week, extracting structure from chaos, to make gold and gemstone jewelry of a refined brilliance. ■

above
Brooch, 2000
boulder opal, pearl,
cast, fabricated 18k gold, 22k gold
$1\,^{7}/_{8} \times 2\,^{3}/_{8}$"
Photo: Glenn Moody

left
Brooch, 1999
rutilated quartz, fabricated 18k gold
$2\,^{3}/_{8} \times 1\,^{1}/_{4}$"
Photo: Glenn Moody

Shelly Wiles is a writer and editor living in Saugus, Massachusetts.

above
Electric iron
collection of Billie Jean Theide
Photo: Billie Jean Theide

below
Kathleen Browne's *Secrets*
magazine collection
Photo: Kathleen Browne

opposite above
Billie Jean Theide
Rogers, 1999
copper, silver plate, enamel, patina
7 x 9 x 2 1/4"
Photo: Rimas VisGirda

opposite below
Kathleen Browne
Suddenly and Secretly She Wished She Could...(brooch), 1999
sterling silver, copper, enamel
3 x 3 x 1/4"
Photo: Kathleen Browne

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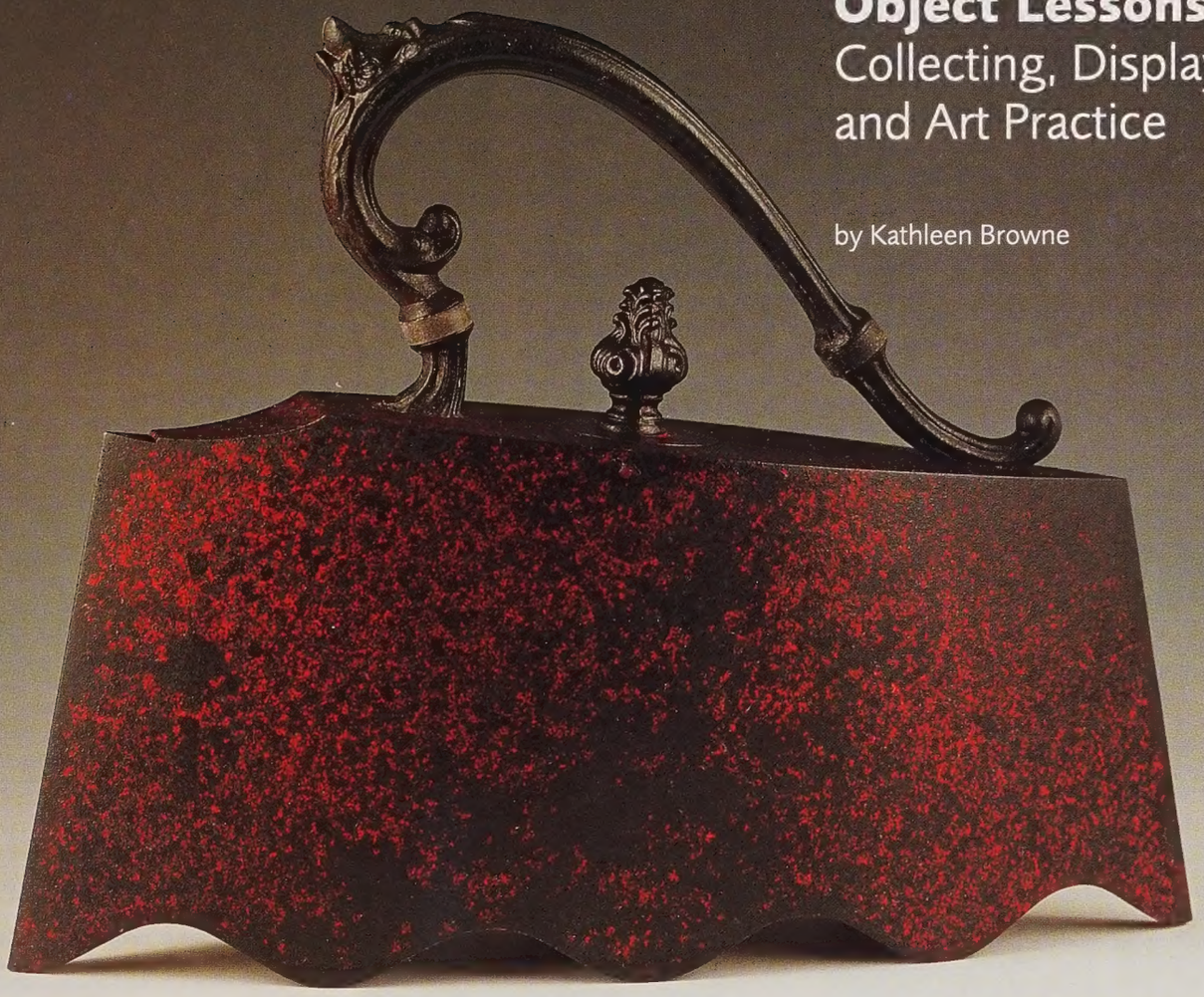
DAUGHTER OF A CIRCUS FREAK
I TEMPTED HIM
UNNATURAL MOTHER
IN TROUBLE AT ELEVEN
My Child Didn't Know She'd Done Wrong
SIN PICTURES WERE HIS TRADE
He Made Me Pose for Him
THEY SHAVED MY HEAD
And Publicly Branded Me Immoral
MY SON, MY SON!
I Wouldn't Let Her Have Him
We Couldn't Stop Running
Guilt Kept Us On The Move
I MARRIED A BIGAMIST
YET I DIDN'T DARE EXPOSE HIM
THEY CALLED ANOTHER WOMAN "MOMMY"
While I Was In Prison
FORCED TO ABANDON OUR BABIES
HER SCREAMS HAUNT ME
They Said
I NEEDED A MAN
But They Married Me Off to a Brute
Nobody Else Would Date Him
I HAD TO BEAR A HATE BABY
SHE BRAGGED ABOUT MY HUSBAND
THEY SAID I INVITED ATTACK
Yet All the Girls at School Were Doing It
I CAUGHT MY SISTER WITH MY BOY FRIEND
I LET HIM HAVE HIS WAY
One Man Knew My Secret
Too Rough With Me
I RAN AWAY FROM HIS LOVING
OUR MARRIAGE WAS A PUNISHMENT
Loveless Wedding Night
I WASN'T AS PURE AS HE THOUGHT
How Could I Marry Anyone?



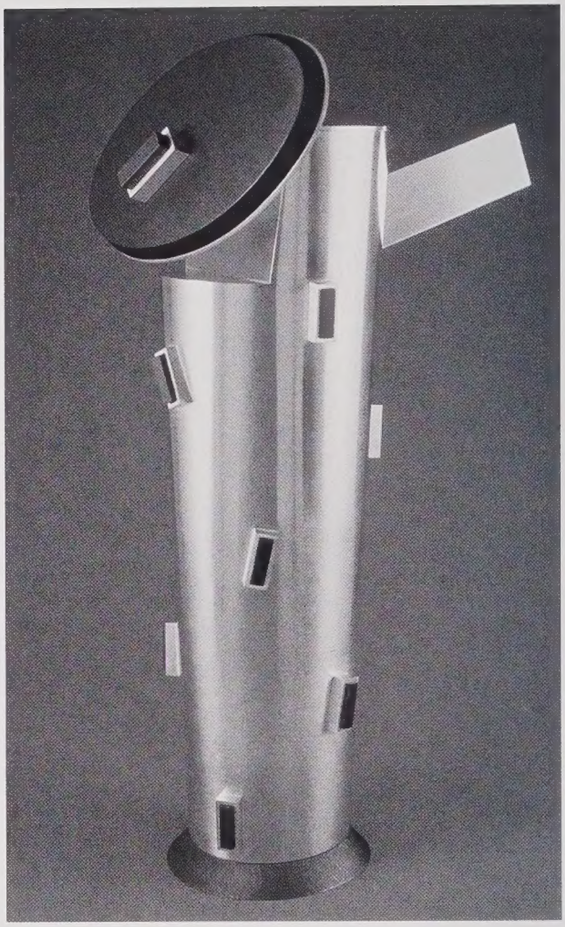
Object Lessons: Collecting, Display, and Art Practice

by Kathleen Browne

"Objects hang before our imagination, continuously re-representing ourselves, and telling the stories of our lives in ways which would be impossible otherwise."

Susan Pearce [1]

The topic of collecting, collectors and collections has garnered considerable attention over the past fifteen years. Traditionally, the subject was of interest mainly to archaeologists and art historians, but today it is being examined from the perspectives of semiology, psychology, sociology, and museology. The activity of collecting is itself rather commonplace, with one in three Americans identifying themselves as a collector.[2] As a social phenomenon, collecting has become a crucial area of study because it engages many key issues including the construction of identity, consumerism, and the cultural role of objects.[3] While I will touch on some of these issues, my primary focus will be on how the objects that artists collect inform and become part of their work. My discussion will examine the collections and work of four artists: Billie Jean Theide, Chris Ramsay, Judy Onofrio, and my own.



In general terms, a collection can be defined as "a group of objects, brought together with intention and sharing a common identity of some kind, which is regarded by its owner as, in some sense, special or set apart."[4] For the collector, particularly the artist-collector, it occupies a much greater space than that, both physically and psychically. Much like a museum, the collection requires acquisition, curatorial attention, and display. The displays are sometimes key to the process of constructing a personal identity but are just as often private meditations on the objects that define our culture and our roles within it. For some collectors, a collection mediated by careful display can constitute a complete world in much the same way that *Wunderkammer* or cabinets of curiosities functioned during the Renaissance.[5]

The ordering aspect of collecting has given rise to the theory "that collecting is a means to strive toward a sense of closure, completion, or perfection."

top left
Billie Jean Theide's collection of Hall Pottery Co. teapots.
Photo: Kathleen Browne

top right
Billie Jean Theide
Confetti, 1990
sterling silver, aluminum
12 x 6 x 4"
Photo: Billie Jean Theide

Just as there are various types of collectors, there are also different motives for collecting. Psychoanalyst Werner Muesterberger suggests that collecting is born out of an inherent desire to find relief from anxiety; to fill a void due to trauma, loss, or childhood deprivation. He posits that as a child, the collector favors things over people as a way of coping with suffering or neglect. He or she fixates on familiar things as a form of comfort and then generalizes the fixation. In Muesterberger's view, this preoccupation with objects often develops into a compulsion to acquire. But new acquisitions only provide temporary satisfaction, and soon the longing returns. This is why repetition is often a key component to the activity of collecting.[6]

When we talk about what if feels like to collect we use metaphors of desire, passion, love, lust, disease, obsession, and addiction.[7] The romantic worldview intrinsic to the act of collecting can lead to a nostalgia that values the "aestheticization of the obsolete."[8] Nostalgia can drive a collection when the collector maintains a view such as, "Things aren't what they used to be" or "They don't make them like they used to." This type of collecting is indeed defined by longing and indulges in the same kind of fantasy that spurred the Gothic Revival movement in nineteenth-century England.

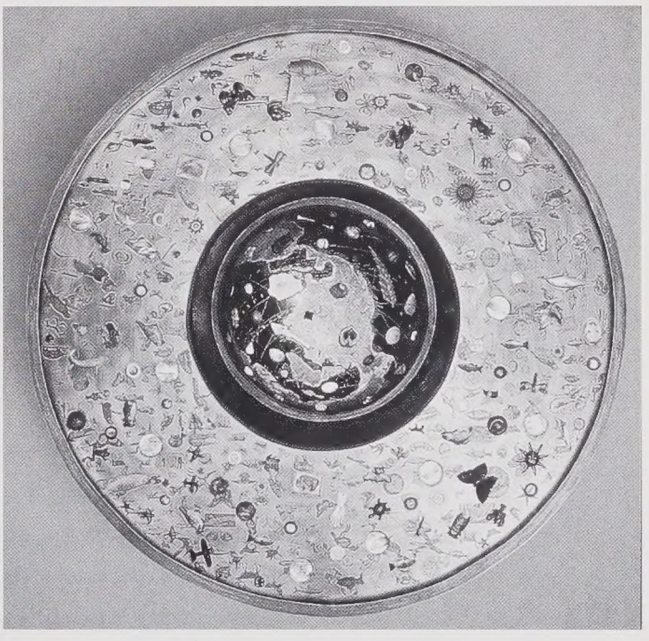
As someone coming from a crafts tradition, I would propose an additional theory as to why artists collect. The area of study generally known as material culture has been of great interest to people in our field because it offers systems of

classification, documentation, and a theoretical base from which to interpret everyday objects, artifacts, or "things." Most artist-collectors, I suspect, are students of material culture.[9] We are intensely interested in the function, manufacture, and cultural implications of objects. That is not to say that our habits don't sometime border on the obsessive or that the environments we create aren't considered bizarre by some standards. But for many of us the display of our collections mirrors our art practice and seamlessly connects living and making. Our engagement with our collections is more about making art than about making hermetic worlds where we can hide when things get tough. The ordering aspect of collecting has given rise to the theory "that collecting is a means to strive toward a sense of closure, completion, or perfection."[10] While the artists I discuss all find a degree of comfort and joy in imposing order, the acts of sorting, organizing and examining our collections more often stimulates thinking about our own creative work.

Billie Jean Theide, a professor at the University of Illinois, began collecting Fiestaware dishes and mesh purses in high school and was greatly influenced by the collecting habits of her graduate professor, Leslie Leupp. Theide's collections are far too numerous to display, but much of what she has on view is meticulously arranged and covers many of the serviceable surfaces in her home. Her displays invite the viewer to compare and contrast objects both formally and metaphorically as a function of their proximity to one another. While Theide collects decorative items such as wedding cake couples, hula girls, panther figurines, flamingos and snow domes, her primary collecting is in the area of industrial design; products manufactured from the 1920s through the 1950s. These collections include Lucite and plastic purses, irons, TVs, radios, salt and pepper shakers, domestic textiles, plastic jewelry, Heywood-Wakefield furniture and her most prized collections, Bakelite items[11] and Hall teapots.[12] These last two collections, particularly the Bakelite, with its vibrant colors and streamlined shapes, have greatly influenced the formal aspects of Theide's work since the late 1980s. The color schemes in some of her anodized pieces from this period reflect those used in printed textiles from the 1940s and 1950s, and her 1990 beverage server, *Confetti*, has all of the spunk and playfulness of a "gold dot" Hall teapot.

For the last nine years Theide has evolved a series of nonfunctional teapots, titled *Butte*, inspired by the Western landscape she viewed on frequent trips between Illinois and Northern California. She also began looking at ironclads from the Civil War, tug boats and irons, collecting the latter. While her first several fabricated teapots had a somber elegance, the addition of pattern and texture to Theide's more recent mesh teapots returns to the exuberance of her earlier work. The piece titled *Rogers*, marks an important shift in her work—the incorporation of found objects.[13] Here Theide has added a found ornate silver-plated handle and lid finial to a fabricated teapot body, resulting in a surprising hybrid.

Chris Ramsay teaches at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. His father is an artist who collected pre-Columbian, African, and Oceanic art, and he himself started collecting natural objects and things he picked up off the ground from an early age. Even then he appreciated these found objects for their formal qualities or as mementos of a place or



left
Chris Ramsay's living and dining rooms with collections
Photo: Chris Ramsay

right
Chris Ramsay
Circle of Life, 1996
commission for University Hospitals of Cleveland, Ohio
copper, bronze, globe, found objects
31" diam.
Photo: Chris Ramsay

top left
Display of Chris Ramsay's collections
Photo: Chris Ramsay

top right
Chris Ramsay
Inlaid River Stones, 1998–99
marble and found objects
27 x 17 x 17"

event. Years ago, Ramsay made a series of pieces he called "pocket jewelry." These talismanic objects fit comfortably in the hand and were made from found materials, the arrangement of which represented the ongoing dialogue between himself and nature. Although Ramsay has discrete collections, much of what he collects finds its way directly into his work. The overarching trait that all his collections share, whether natural or man-made, is evidence of wear through use or erosion.[14] The dialogue between the natural and the man-made is best exemplified by his collection of hand-made birds and airplanes both connoting the romance of flight.

The display of these objects alludes to scientific classification but is actually the result of Ramsay's ongoing narrative about our place in the natural world.

Among the natural objects that Ramsay collects are cicada shells, seashells, turtle shells, rocks, and sticks. The display of these objects alludes to scientific classification but is actually the result of Ramsay's ongoing narrative about our place in the natural world. A recurring theme in Ramsay's work is the circle or cycle of life. He expresses such cyclical patterns by collecting worn bits and fragments of bone, rock, shell, pottery, toys, rusted fasteners, and various other junk and embedding them in configurations that are nonhierarchical and seemingly random. Like all memento mori, his work suggests that we are subject to our mortality no matter how dominant our position in the pecking order; that ultimately, we are all embedded. This idea is best exemplified in Ramsay's 1996 commission, *Circle of Life*, for the University Hospitals of Cleveland.

Ramsay has been collecting globes and incorporating them in his work for some time. With their obsolete political borders and imperceptibly changing topography, they are the perfect symbol of our attempts to dominate as well as fit into the natural order. In *World View: Birds* (1999), he returns to the globe form but fabricates it himself so that the viewer can see the interior workings of the stereoscope. The stereoscopic card features a three-dimensional image of a bird caged within a sphere and at the base are displayed sentimental, though iconic, representations of birds commonly found on knickknack shelves. Ramsay's latest work returns to the embedding activity, but in a very direct and stripped down manner. After a stay in Pietrasanta, Italy, he began working with Carrara marble, creating intimate hand-held stones that, because of their weight and surface, invite interaction through touching.

Judy Onofrio, a self-taught artist from Rochester, Minnesota, grew up around fine objects and antiques collected by her mother during their world travels. Onofrio was

influenced by her great aunt Trude, who was considered eccentric by the family and would be labeled an "outsider" artist today for her painted wooden boxes covered inside and out with surface imagery. It is difficult to enumerate Onofrio's collections because she essentially collects everything, both the natural and man-made. Like Theide, she has collections of Hall teapots, Bakelite and plastic jewelry among other things. One interest that she and I share is in do-it-yourself or home craft projects, and my favorite collection is her Mrs. Butterworth bottles, maple syrup bottles that were saved and decorated by women decades ago. These bottles are a prime example of the permeability between Onofrio's collections and her work. Collecting figurines that have an iconographic importance, she often uses these figures directly

It is difficult to enumerate Onofrio's collections because she essentially collects everything, both the natural and man-made.

in her own pieces as part of a symbolic language that exploits their fundamental meaning. For instance, Mrs. Butterworth bottles are enlisted to engage issues of gender, and figures of presidents Washington and Lincoln are frequent stand-ins for larger abstractions such as truth and justice. The seamlessness among her collections, their display, and her art practice are most evident in her elaborate yard installation and the interiors of her house known as Judyland. An ongoing effort, Judyland is the result of years of collaboration with artists, friends, and family. The extravagant grave site of a beloved pet, Mr. Earl, is both hilarious and doting and exemplifies the edge that Onofrio continues to sharpen.

Onofrio's own work runs the gamut from obsessively beaded jewelry to large installations such as her traveling exhibition, also titled, "Judyland." For the installation, she encrusted taxidermy animal forms with jewels and hung them like trophies. At once seductive and repulsive, their terrible beauty awakened in viewers discordant emotions of pleasure and fear. Onofrio's recent series uses circus imagery as a

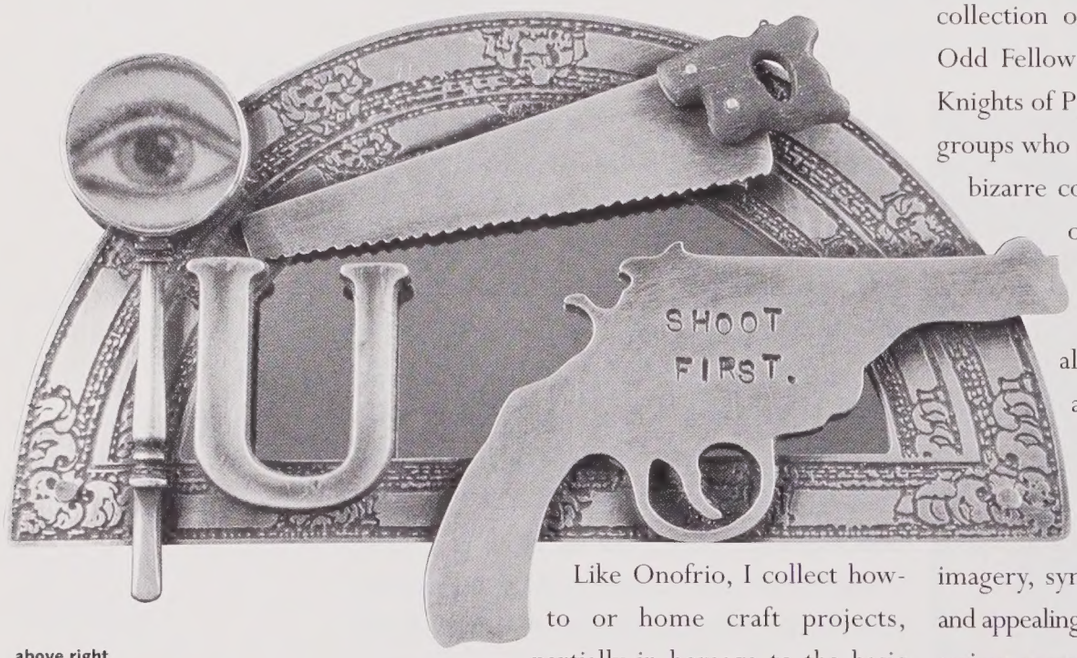
above
Judy Onofrio
Pair Pear, 1996
mixed media,
52 x 41 x 21"
Photo: Gus Gustafson

left
Judy Onofrio's foyer and installation of her button collection
Photo: Kathleen Browne

metaphor for the complexities of daily life, as in *Astonishing Feat,* from 1999. These latest works occupy space in a livelier way, while the surfaces seem less embellished, almost stripped down in comparison to her previous work. Onofrio is incredibly skilled at changing scale, and her brooches have the same strong iconography, attention to detail, and general verve of the larger works. The success of her work is dependent on her constant collection of materials. Unlike the bricoleur–someone who makes do with whatever is at hand–Onofrio has created a situation where everything she needs is literally *handy*.

The bulk of my collection, though, could be described as objects that obtain power due to the belief invested in them and what they represent.

collection of fraternal order regalia from the Odd Fellows, Redman, Woodman of America, Knights of Pythias, Masons, and numerous other groups who performed elaborate and sometimes bizarre costumed rituals during their heyday of 1860-1930s.[15] My initial interest in the badges had to do with their use of symbolic language, but they also serve as indicators of identity and association. Drawing heavily on the regalia's symbolism, I created a series of brooches titled *Accusations: I Saw You. . . .* At first glance, the imagery, symbols, and words appear whimsical and appealing, but when decoded they reveal a more serious message. The wearer brings the accusation into the public sphere, striking at random.



above right
Kathleen Browne's fraternal order badge collection
Photo: Kathleen Browne

above left
Kathleen Browne
Accusations: I Saw You Shoot First (brooch), 1994
sterling silver, ulexite, wood,
3 1/4 x 2 1/2 x 1/2"

Like Onofrio, I collect how-to or home craft projects, partially in homage to the basic human impulse to make. I see my work as part of that continuum. The bulk of my collection, though, could be described as objects that obtain power due to the belief invested in them and what they represent. These collections include religious items, fortune telling devices, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century fraternal order regalia (particularly badges), commemorative plates, memorials, and gambling items. I am most passionate about my

Over the years, I have taken hundreds of slides of various sites, objects and phenomena, focusing on types of display–commercial, vernacular, memorial, etc. This collection of images has prompted my research into the "rhetoric of display,"[16] or how display can persuade, entice, or express authority. Scientific display, which concerns itself with classification, examination, and education, was appropriated

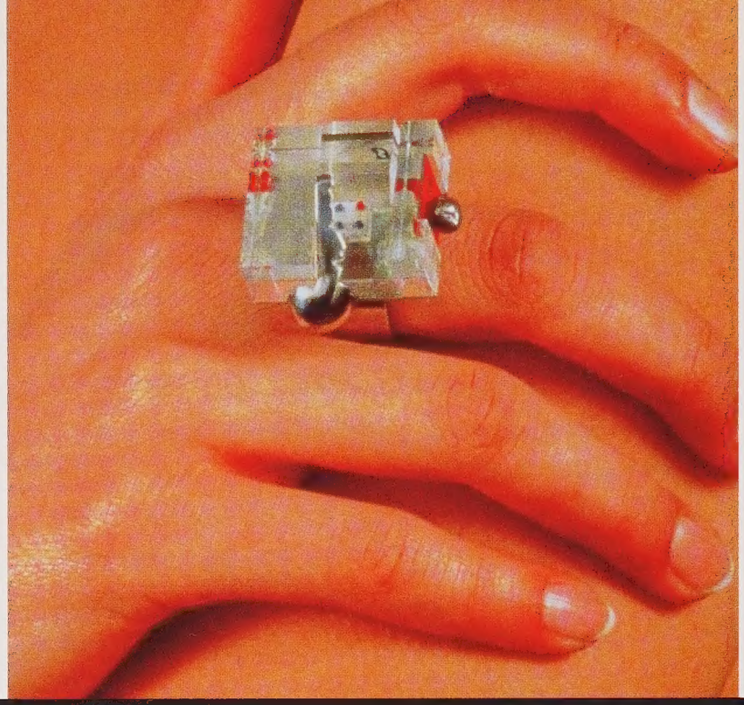
for the piece *Alike/Unlike,* which examines identity both inherited and constructed. Butterflies and moths were used in the series *Sensum/Sensorium*, which in Latin translates loosely as "that which is sensed and the apparatus through which we sense it." I used photographic images of the human sensory organs, such as eyes, ears, mouths, and hands, engaged in the act of watching, listening, talking, grabbing. These hand-painted photographs were fashioned into insects and presented like scientific specimens for close examination. Pinned and available for scrutiny, these objects also allow for the study of human interaction, mediated by the senses

In works like *Suddenly and Secretly She Wished She Could...*, I appropriated images from my collection of 1950s *Secrets* magazines, which featured stories of sexual adventurism coupled with bad judgment and its dire consequences. The photos from the magazine were overly dramatic and stagy but somehow captured the zeitgeist regarding female transgression. These images have been converted to decals and fired on the surface of enamel ovals, in reference to portrait miniatures. I employ these intentionally outdated, pop culture images to document both the changes and continuities within prescribed gender roles.

Each of our collections interface in different ways with our work and the practice of art making. For Billie Jean Theide, the relationship is more formal; she extracts visual information and examines the physical function of objects. Chris Ramsay also acknowledges his initial interest in the formal properties of things but at the core of his work is an engagement with their cultural meaning. While Ramsay and Judy Onofrio both incorporate some of what they collect in their work, Onofrio's approach to collecting also mirrors her obsessive way of working. My own interest is in the way that objects function psychically, and I often borrow their original function as a basis on which to build an idea. Like good students, we have all applied the lessons learned from the objects in our lives. ■

Kathleen Browne is head of the Jewelry/Metals/Enameling department at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio.

1 Susan M. Pearce, *Museum, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study*, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992, p. 47.
2 R. Belk, 1998, "Possessions and the Extended Self," *Journal of Consumer Research,* 15: 139–68. Cited in Susan M. Pierce, *On Collecting*, Routledge, 1995, p. 159.
3 Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting*, Routledge, 1995, p. vVI.
4 Ibid., p.159.
5 For two excellent histories of the *Wunderkammer* (cabinets of curiosities), see Werner Muesterberger, *Collecting: An Unruly Passion*, Princeton University Press, 1994, pp.165-203 and Anthony Alan Shelton, "Cabinets of Transgression: Renaissance Collections and the Incorporation of the New World," in *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, Harvard University Press, 1994, pp. 177–203.
6 Muesterberger, *Collecting*, pp. 3-48. For a lively discourse on fetishism and its relationship to collecting see Mieke Bal, "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting," in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, eds., *The Cultures of Collecting,* Harvard University Press, 1994, pp. 97–115.
7 Brenda Danet and Tamar Katriel, "Glorious Obsessions, Passionate Lovers, and Hidden Treasures: Collecting, Metaphor, and the Romantic, Ethic" Stephen Harold Riggins, ed. *The Socialness of Things: Essays on the Socio-Semiotics of Objects,* Mouton de Gruyter, 1994, pp. 22–61.
8 Ibid., p. 25.
9 "Material culture: the totality of artifacts in a culture; the vast universe of objects by humankind to cope with the physical world, to facilitate social intercourse, to delight our fancy, and to create symbols of meaning." Thomas J. Schlereth, "Material Culture and Cultural Research" in *Material Culture, A Research Guide*, ed. Thomas J. Schlereth, University Press of Kansas, 1985. p. 4.
10 Danet and Katriel, "Glorious Obsessions," p. 24.
11 Bakelite was the first entirely manmade plastic. It was invented by Leo Baekeland in 1907 and was popular for the manufacture of domestic and decorative items as well as for jewelry during the first half of the twentieth century.
12 These teapots were made by the Hall China Co. of East Liverpool, Ohio. This company still produces pottery and is the largest producer of teapots in the country. The most collectible teapots are from the 1920s through the 1950s.
13 I have a disclaimer to offer here. I have paired up the images of her iron collection with her teapots. There is no direct relationship between each teapot and iron, but it is interesting to see how these forms, through familiarity, are stored and have the potential for realization.
14 A good example is his collection of baseball mitts.
15 The best book by far that I have found on this subject is Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America*, Yale University Press, 1989.
16 Stephen Bann, "Shrines, Curiosities, and the Rhetoric of Display," Lynne Cooke and Peter Wollen, eds. *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances*, Bay Press, 1995.



"JEWELS OF MIND AND MENTALITY: DUTCH JEWELRY DESIGN 1950–2000"

PHILADELPHIA ART ALLIANCE

NOVEMBER 11, 2000 - JANUARY 7, 2001

by BRUCE METCALF

"Jewels of Mind and Mentality" was organized by the Museum Het Kruithaus to document Dutch avant-garde jewelry from 1950 to the present. Seen as a whole, the exhibition was dedicated to the proposition that, "Body" decoration without an underlying argument has no reason to exist," as essayist Antje von Graevenitz stated in the catalogue. It is a proposition that was nicely demonstrated, although it was equally clear that there were several lines of argument in Dutch jewelry.

In the 1950s, progressive Dutch jewelry was somewhat similar to American jewelry of the same period: for instance, both countries went through a biomorphic phase. But Dutch jewelry had no wild men like Alexander Calder or Sam Kramer, and most of the work up to 1965 seems tame to an American eye. Then Emmy van Leersum and Gijs Bakker appeared, with their dramatic aluminum collars and bracelets. The two changed the course of Dutch jewelry. Presumably, many of their contemporaries regarded themselves as designers, for there was a strong effort to make jewelry for a mass market, often motivated by the desire to render jewelry nonelitist. To this day, Bakker is as much an industrial designer as he is a jeweler.

One aspect of van Leersum's work characteristic of much European jewelry and equally uncharacteristic of American is her extended variations on a single theme. Her famous series of stainless cuffs distorted with a single sawcut is typical of her highly rational approach, and the exhibition had a number of such series on view.

All that cool but dramatic rationalism created a backlash, here personified by Marian Herbst and Onno Boekhoudt. Herbst turned to oddball materials and a sense of personal gesture, while Boekhoudt asserted the primacy of usable jewelry and his own type of quirky abstraction. Both specialized in one-off objects. The exhibition's curators propose that these four figures—van Leersum, Bakker, Herbst, and Boekhoudt—are the pillars upon which most Dutch artjewelry presently stands. So, Paul Derez can be seen as inheriting Bakker's interest in serial production because all his work is made in multiples. Or Lucy Sarneel carries on Boekhoudt's interest in unconventional metals in the production of jewelry: her zinc floral necklace is one of the pleasant surprises in this show.

Many of the names and some of the works in "Jewels of Mind and Mentality" are familiar to Americans from books and exhibition catalogues, so one of the interesting things about seeing this jewelry for the first time was to match

reality against the expectations created through years of viewing photographs. Paul Derez's work was smaller than I thought, and Lam de Wolf's fabric necklaces were neater. However, I am not sure how most Americans would respond to this collection. All that Dutch sobriety and cool rationalism doesn't necessarily make for compelling visual experiences. Most of these jewelers resorted to large scale to inject some drama into their pieces: without sheer size, much of this work is rather academic and dry.

But the most important revelation of "Jewels of Mind and Mentality" was that it was done at all. While flawed—a number of worthy Dutch jewelers were not included—a survey of a nation's studio jewelry, along with a serious examination of its intellectual underpinnings, is a notable achievement.

Bruce Metcalf is a jeweler and occasional writer from Philadelphia.

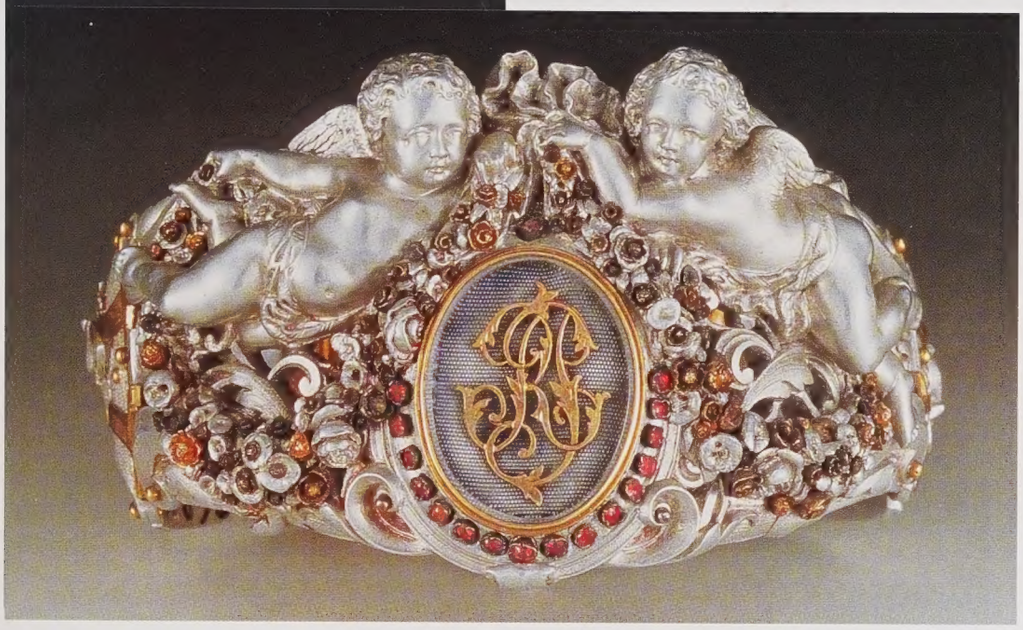
above left
Onno Boekhoudt
Ring, 1968
silver, perspex

above right
Gijs Bakker
Bib, 1976
photograph on linen

"ALUMINUM BY DESIGN: JEWELRY TO JETS"

CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF ART, PITTSBURGH, PA
OCTOBER 28, 2000 – FEBRUARY 11, 2001
THE COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM, NEW YORK
MARCH 20 - JULY 15, 2001

by LIZA WELLMAN



Aluminum by Design: Jewelry to Jets, you knew you were in for something unusual. An Airstream trailer was parked outside the museum, a Rolls-Royce 'Silver Ghost' and an Audi A8 frame sat in the foyer, and a pallet of pristine soda cans flanked the stairs. This diversity continued throughout the exhibition, but the effect was anything but scattered. These various objects were all tied together by the fact that they are all made predominantly from a single material: aluminum.

That this lightweight, reflective, malleable, and corrosion-resistant metal is the focus of a retrospective is all the more intriguing because it is now so pervasive that we tend to take it for granted. Yet aluminum has a relatively short history: although scientists were aware of its presence in the earth's crust by the early nineteenth century, it wasn't until nearly ninety years later that a commercially viable way of extracting it was developed. Pittsburgh was one of the most important incubators of this developing technology, and it is fitting that the traveling exhibition originated here. The impact of the metal, however, is global in scale. Aluminum has affected all aspects of material culture and has profoundly influenced life in the twentieth century. To trace this influence, curator Sarah Nichols has divided *Aluminum by Design* into four sections arranged in loose chronological order.

The first section, "Inventing Aluminum," documents the emergence of the aluminum industry and its search for sustainable markets. Because its price did not fall below that of silver until the 1860s, its initial rarity made it a prized material. A collection of French jewelry from around this time shows that it was often paired with materials like gold, garnets, and pearls, and embossed and chased with great care. Once the electrolytic method of extracting aluminum replaced the problematic chemical method, however, aluminum became much more accessible—which presented a different set of problems. It became, in a sense, a scientific marvel with no immediate applications, a "solution without a problem." Some manufacturers and designers sought to use aluminum to imitate or substitute for other materials; perhaps the most stunning example of this in the exhibition is an aluminum violin. Still other designers experimented with aluminum and sought to treat it as a modern metal with a vocabulary and purpose of its own.

As the new century progressed, many others embraced the new metal as they followed the utopian visions of the Machine Age. Their efforts in a wide variety of areas are presented in the exhibition's second section, "The Modernist Ideal." Transportation, for example, was completely revolutionized by aluminum's strength and lightness, as displayed in the Zeppelin girder, propeller, car engine, and two motorcycles on view. Architecture also adopted aluminum. Its use is represented here by, among other things, a carlin from Buckminster Fuller's 1947 Wichita House, noteworthy for its use of aviation technology. Though aluminum was well established in the kitchen by the 1920s, it began to invade the rest of the modern home with domestic products such as streamlined vacuum cleaners that carried associations of speed and efficiency. A collection of Russel Wright's spun aluminum serving pieces attest to aluminum's respectable place within domestic life. This section of the exhibition also showcases lighting, a natural fit given aluminum's reflective qualities, and furniture and objects by early modernist designers who chose to celebrate the material's unique qualities.

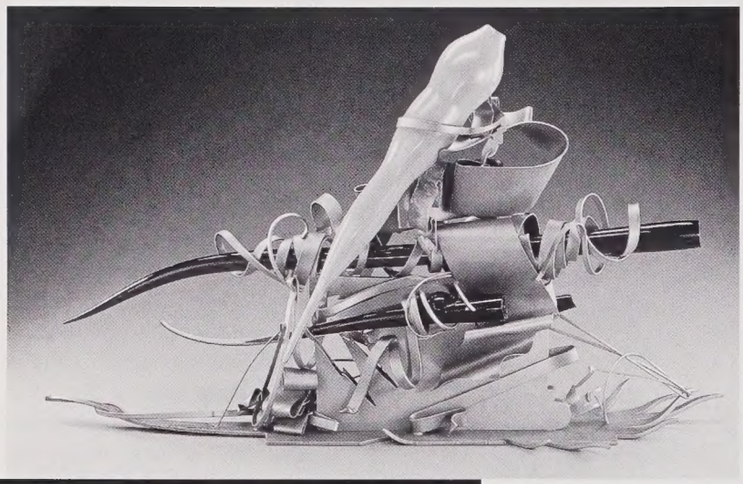
World War II saw a tremendous increase in aluminum production, and when the war ended producers competed to create new marketplaces for the metal and to claim territory from other materials. This battle is the focus of *Aluminum by Design*'s third section, "Conflict and Competition." As evidence by the Forecast Program that Alcoa ran in the mid-fifties, producers spent no small effort on promotion. They also began to push aluminum into areas that had traditionally been held by other materials, such as packaging, construction, sports equipment, and transportation; many of these battles are raging still. Within this competitive environment, one of the advantages aluminum can offer is that it so easily recyclable. That said, the exhibition displays several objects that were recycled *before* they were resmelted, including Boris Bally's chair made of recycled signs, and Clare Graham's chaise made of aluminum taken from soda cans.

These witty objects lead easily into the exhibition's last section, "Crossing Boundaries: Furniture, Fashion, and Fun Stuff." The name accurately describes the array of works displayed, including aluminum dresses, mannequins, a robotic dog, a time capsule, and a Chrysler/Plymouth Prowler. Among the highlights are stacking chairs made of superplastic aluminum and designed by London-based Ron Arad; shimmering fabric by Japanese artist Junichi Arai, who has been working with metallic fibers since the mid-1950s; and bangles and brooches by British artist Jane Adam, who uses aluminum exclusively to create her delicately anodized and layered works. Pod-shaped furniture by Australian-born designer Marc Newson, particularly his *Lockheed Lounge*, makes the aluminum seem almost liquid. Newson's *Lounge* has become the exhibition's informal mascot, perhaps because it captures the modern associations that have defined aluminum's 150-year history as the "metal of the future."

Liza Wellman is a professor of industrial design at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh.

above left
French, attributed to Honoré Bourdoncle
Bracelet, ca. 1856–60
aluminum

above right
Marc Newson
Lockheed Lounge, 1985–86
riveted sheet aluminum over fiberglass, rubber



ALBERT PALEY: "INTEGRATION AND DIALOGUE"

RILEY HAWK GALLERIES, KIRKLAND, WASHINGTON
DECEMBER 3–30, 2000
by MATTHEW KANGAS

Albert Paley's latest sculpture demonstrates a growing assurance over the latest material he has conquered—glass—but as with all his work, there is something coercive in the way the materials are jammed together. They are beautiful, to be sure, and endowed with enough underlying tension and telltale decorative frills to keep them from being overwhelmed by the perception of enormous physical strength.

Paley has covered a lot of ground during the past decade: there were the extravagant furniture pieces, which attracted attention from contemporary art critics and decorative arts historians alike; the numerous art-in-public-places projects and various large-scale corporate commissions that are less known but constitute an important part of Paley's evolution as a metals artist; and several gallery exhibits and one museum retrospective of his freestanding abstract sculptures. The works on view at Riley Hawk were his second grouping to include blown and cast glass, made with Seattle master glassblower Martin Blank.

In many ways, these recent works represent a creative advance, having larger scale, a more effective integration of glass into metal, and the introduction of color into the glass, all the while retaining Paley's trademark of pushing materials to their limits. However, the artist often fell back on earlier, proven compositions and shapes such as the baroque vertical column and the tendril-encased shaft.

Paley's treatment of the metals is, not surprisingly, more varied than the glass so that, in *Crystal* and *White Vortex*, matte stainless steel contrasts nicely with flashy, shiny clear glass. In *Clear Fold*, oxidized steel provides a warmly familiar, jagged envelope for a tall fan-topped glass shaft and, in *Suspension*, a Halloween-orange elongated vessel is surrounded by blackened steel lines reminiscent of Paley's Jugendstil period of the late 1980s.

Far more effective, *Tangle* and *Twisted Arc* have rougher glass surfaces, although the square base of *Tangle* is a case of pedestal overkill. The metal in *Twisted Arc* is best of all, forged, twisted and oxidized to a smoldering blue that brilliantly complements the clear glass forms. *Estuary* is the most ambitious, setting two long horizontal blue glass forms near a diagonal chartreuse vessel, all atop a pile of sandblasted stainless steel with a small ribbon of oxidized bronze.

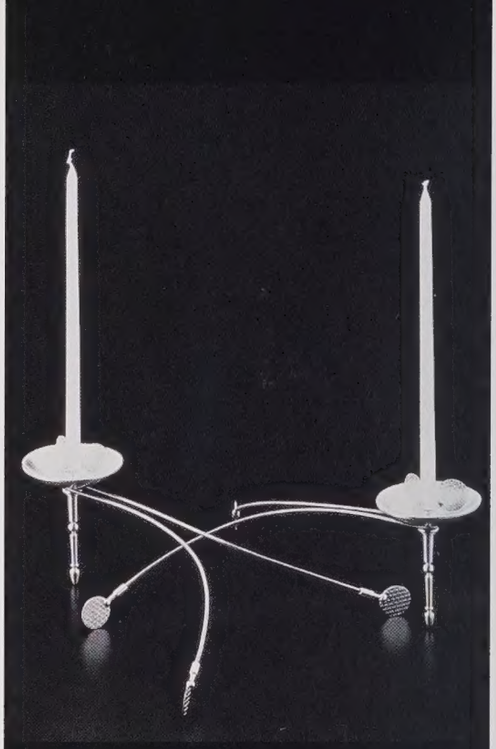
Opus is the least satisfying, with its bronze accents uncomfortably recalling brass accents on a Pier One floor lamp, along with arc-shaped glass structural sections supported by more stainless-steel struts. Paley's stated formal aim for this body of work is a blend of the "organic and geometric," and he mixes up both here with regrettable results. No matter how large his sculptures become, or how monumental in feel they are, the urge for jewelry-like ornamentation is always there, sometimes exploited successfully, sometimes getting the better of him.

Paley straddles art historical traditions from 1890 to 1990, and his work appears to be a unique hybrid of Art Nouveau and mid-century modern. He is not a Minimalist, as he seriously embraces the logic of ornament, nor is he a Post-Minimalist, given his avoidance of squishy alternative materials like latex, wax, or plastic. That leaves modernist sculpture, and here Paley's work resonates next to that of Anthony Caro, Michael Todd, or Michael Steiner, artists who also use metals as linear filigree and eschew mass and volume. Like Paley, these artists produce nonrepresentational work but tend toward rectangular and horizontal compositions, unlike Paley's ubiquitous vertical shafts.

In the exhibition catalogue, essayist Margery Aronson sums up the content of Paley's work with the word "complexity." She could have mentioned industrial decay, postnuclear ecological collapse, or the manic conspicuous consumption of the 1980s. As they stand, Paley's new glass and steel sculptures confirm an already abundant talent but, with such aggressive claims for sculptural status, one still wishes for a surrounding discourse that goes beyond material description, intentional constructs, and the numbing awe induced by Paley's technical prowess.

Matthew Kangas is a Seattle-based writer and contributing editor for *Art in America*, *GLASS* and *Sculpture*.

above left
Albert Paley
Estuary, 2000
Formed and fabricated stainless steel with oxidized bronze, green and blue glass, 48 x 76 x 22".
Courtesy of Riley Hawk Galleries, Kirkland, Washington.
Photo: Bruce Miller



ROGER MILLAR

SURACI GALLERY, MARYWOOD UNIVERSITY, SCRANTON, PA
OCTOBER 12, 2000-DECEMBER 15, 2000
by VICKIE SEDMAN

Roger Millar's exhibition at Marywood University exemplified his extraordinary career as an artist and teacher. As head of the jewelry and silversmithing program at the Glasgow School of Art since 1984, much of Millar's career has been spent as an educator, and most of his work has been executed for commissions. As a result, there are very few opportunities to see his work in public. Millar's commitment to education was evident throughout the exhibition, which was designed to demonstrate how his ideas evolved from initial drawings to finished objects. Numerous drawings documenting each piece and illuminating the creative process were on view. Additional works, not included in the exhibition, were represented by photographs to provide an overview of the body of work in each series.

Trained as a designer at the Royal College of Art in the mid-1960s at a time when courses were geared toward product design, this early training has continued to influence Millar's work. He has nonetheless remained open to new ideas about form and function. The work in the exhibition speaks to many of Millar's fundamental values: a love and respect of materials; an investigation of surface, texture, and color; and an exploration of and interest in functionality. These principles manifest themselves in elegant and refined objects. The wonderful thing about Millar's work is the perfect balance he achieves between function and a playful approach to form. His focus on the work's functional nature directly impacts his approach to decoration. Each piece has an economy of elements, carefully arranged and finely executed, revealing his years of experience as a master craftsman.

Among the most pleasing pieces in the exhibition were the three pairs of candlesticks.

They all played with the notion of balance, arrangement, and space, and were restrained and minimal in construction. One pair suggested two dancers standing on point, counterbalanced by long metal arcs. The spatial relationships lent the work dynamism, while the formal restraint made each piece monolithic and dramatic. The exploration of balance continued in a series of bowls, which presented variations on a tripod arrangement. Each bowl had a massive flange that was pierced by one of three legs. The other two legs perforated the bowl, terminating in a brass finial that added contrast and interest to the interior. The ornamentation in this series was functional as well as decorative, and the use of patinization nicely reinforced the form's mass and color.

Drawing on archetypal shapes from his silversmithing background, Millar's latest work is defined by a purity of form and commitment to balance. His mastery of materials is evident in exquisite surfaces and beautiful patinas. Every element contributes to the success of these objects, which are imbued with a classical quality that is timeless.

Vickie Sedman is a professor of crafts at the Tyler School of Art.

opposite page, top right
Roger Millar
Candleholders, 1998
silver

above
Garry Knox Bennett
Necklace #15, 2000
23k gold and silver-plated brass, glass beads

above right
Garry Knox Bennett
Necklace, 1996
copper, brass, beads, gold-plate

"MADE IN OAKLAND: THE FURNITURE OF GARRY KNOX BENNETT"

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, NEW YORK
JANUARY 18 – APRIL 29, 2001

"WHAT'S IN A NAME? NEW JEWELRY BY GARRY KNOX BENNETT A.K.A. GERRALDO BENNUCCI"

JULIE: ARTISANS' GALLERY, NEW YORK
JANUARY 17 – FEBRUARY 8, 2001
by KAREN S. CHAMBERS

Although it was titled "Made in Oakland: The Furniture of Garry Knox Bennett," this exhibition covered much more than Bennett's furniture, which is only fitting given his multifaceted career. Bennett studied painting and metal at the California College of Arts and Crafts from 1958 to 1962 as a prelude to becoming best known as a convention-challenging furniture maker. To illuminate his oeuvre, curator Ursula Ilse-Neuman wisely featured examples of Bennett's early metalwork, including a 1965 hair ornament. A fanciful crown of curling, hammered-and-soldered gold-plated wire has the curvilinear grace typical of the 1960s psychedelic/funk styling that Bennett absorbed early on, and is still found in his work. Bennett has not ceased to make jewelry, expanding his technical vocabulary to include casting, electroforming, and acid-etching steel. Since 1991 he has signed his jewelry with the alias Gerraldo Bennucci. Metalwork has played an important role in Bennett's career from the start, and in 1964 he founded Squirkenworks, making roach clips and peace pendants with his metalworking skills. This hippie paraphernalia proved so popular that he hired a master die-cutter in order to mass-produce his designs. The success of the company enabled Bennett to pursue his work in sculptural metalwork and furniture. In 1973 Bennett began making clocks that combined metal and wood and then furniture using metal as a decorative accent. His 1976 *Four Drawer Tall Chest*, with its etched galvanized-steel top and graceful metal drawer pulls, has a strong Arts-and-Crafts bent, a tendency that continues through his later work. Subordinated to the furniture form, the decorative metalwork is nonetheless an integral part of the whole design. Metal comes to the fore in *Drop Top Table with Lamp* (1976), which updates a traditional eighteenth-century tea table with an aluminum top.

Bennett has never been a purist, using whatever material best suits his purposes—aesthetic or functional. Nor has he ever felt the need to focus on any single art form, producing furniture, clocks, lamps, and jewelry simultaneously. Throughout it all, however, he has maintained a refreshing irreverence and a formal vocabulary that is consistent and distinctly his own. For example, a 1972 necklace of gold, ivory, lapis lazuli, and coral, with its amoebic forms and uneasy transitions, finds a corollary in

a 1996 electroformed copper, brass and gold plate necklace. The later piece is more dimensional, but the organic forms and surprising, if not awkward, composition clearly echoes the earlier work.

A more focused look at Bennett's recent jewelry was provided by the concurrent exhibition at Julie: Artisans' Gallery. The works on view revealed Bennett's love of ordinary materials often paired with the precious; a deft hand with contour and surface decoration; an attention to detail; and occasional overblown scale. *Necklace No. 15* is composed of cutouts typical of Bennett; biomorphic forms morph into more geometric shapes. Gold- and silverplated brass, they are strung with beveled sandblasted glass beads that evoke Art Deco architecture and tubular glass beads the color of jade. Punctuating the aggressively large clasp are bright red shapes with diamond-patterned edges. The other pieces in the show are similar in their combination of materials and unusual juxtapositions of shapes. Bennett's pieces tend to be large and best worn by statuesque women in black. But they are wearable, just as Bennett's furniture is always functional. This is not quiet jewelry—but one would not expect that from the voluble Bennett.

Karen S. Chambers is a Manhattan-based independent curator and writer.

left
Ramona Solberg
Harpoon Tip Necklace, 1998
Silver and walrus tusk
12 x 6 1/2 x 3/4"

below
Lori Talcot
Reliquary, 1999
Silver and gold-plated silver
6 1/2" diameter

"UNDER THE INFLUENCE: NORTHWEST JEWELRY AND ETHNOGRAPHIC OBJECTS"

TACOMA ART MUSEUM
SEPTEMBER 19, 2000 – JANUARY 1, 2001

by SUSAN MYERS

Under the Influence, curated by Mia McEldowney, featured the work of seventeen contemporary Northwest jewelers juxtaposed with ethnographic objects from Northwest collections. The works were selected to reflect the influences of diverse cultural traditions, past and present. In some instances, the influence was direct and obvious, but more frequently the connection was more subtle, such as a shared pattern or form.

The jewelry and ethnographic objects were displayed in traditional museum vitrines, with accompanying labels instructing viewers on the comparisons to be made between corresponding objects. These carefully staged juxtapositions both illuminated and distorted the intended meaning of the contemporary jewelry and its ethnographic counterparts. In its mixing of cultural artifacts, this exhibition bears comparison with the work of artist-curator Fred Wilson. Wilson's installations using museum collections investigate the assumptions behind the display of objects and explore the interconnectedness of cultural traditions and themes. Similar concerns were represented here. Artist Kiff Slemmons's series of hands uses this universal symbol to comment on the process of growing up in our culture. Her work is matched with several hand-related artifacts including a twentieth-century ceramic *Hand Mould for Rubber Gloves*, an Inuit wood and leather *Ice Scratcher*, and bronze *Garunda Hands* from seventeenth-century India.

Sarah Hood's pieces all relate to nature, a common theme in the art of diverse cultures. Her *Savannah*, a necklace and bracelet made from live oak pods, is paired with a Hawaiian necklace constructed out of KuKui nuts. Without a label describing the geographic source of the nuts and seeds, it would be difficult to discern which work was Hood's and which was the ethnographic object. Likewise, Lori Talcott's silver necklace *Reliquary* is almost indistinguishable from a nineteenth-century Sumatran necklace that employs a similar construction technique.

Given that these contemporary and ethnographic artifacts are so visually alike and presented equally within a museum setting, the viewer is left to wonder about each object's original function, history, and cultural context. The exhibition also raises questions about the acquisition of these objects and their presence within a museum collection. What is the history behind the importation of the West African *Ivory Bracelet* that was shown in conjunction with Ramona Solberg's work? What is the story behind the walrus tusk and silver included in Solberg's own *Harpoon Tip Necklace*? What issues are involved when artists or museums take objects and materials from one culture and place them directly into the context of another?

Museum collections are generally organized into ethnically grouped installations, informed by specific cultural histories that do not intermingle. *Under the Influence* challenged traditional installation methods by presenting artifacts of diverse cultures together, and the dialogue generated by this mode of presentation is the exhibition's real strength. Yet, it was disappointing that viewers were still instructed by the labels and installation as to the specific comparisons to be made. There was not nearly enough room to maneuver and reference the various connections and influences among the cultures and works on view.

Susan Myers is a visual artist and metalsmith residing in Seattle.

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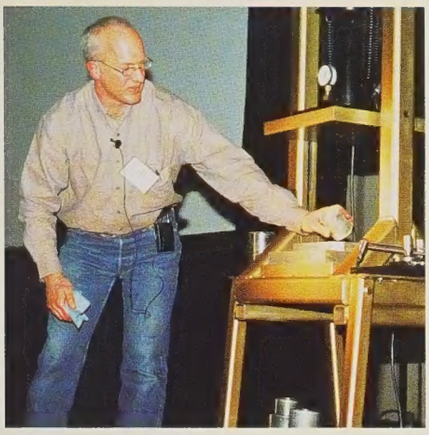

Richmond SNAG Conference

Six hundred jewelers, metalsmiths, collectors and gallery owners gathered for four days in Richmond, Virginia, for the 2001 SNAG conference. The conference was generously sponsored by Hoover & Strong, refiners and manufacturers of precious metal products since 1912, and the conference host was Virginia Commonwealth University. This year's conference attracted a record 230 students.

The presentations began with keynote speaker Clare Phillips, assistant curator of metalwork, silver and jewelry at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Other presentations ranged from Tacey Rosolowski's brilliant examination of how adornment gives meaning to the human body, to Phil Poirier's technical demonstration of new developments in deep forming using the hydraulic press, to Joyce J. Scott's song-filled performance and slide presentation. Eight exhibitions included "Tiaras Will Be Worn," a show of fanciful contemporary interpretations of the classical jewelry form, and "Zierat International Contemporary Jewelry," a show of cutting-edge works by thirty American and European artists. The next SNAG conference is in Denver, June 12–15, 2002.

Helen Drutt English Honored

Helen Drutt English was awarded SNAG's highest tribute, the Honorary Member Award, at the Richmond Conference for her extraordinary contribution to the jewelry field as an advocate, gallery owner, and author. Helen was part of the nucleus that sparked the resurgence of the American craft movement during the 1960s. In 1973 she opened the seminal Helen Drutt Gallery in Philadelphia. Showing artists from both the United States and abroad, Helen brought the jewelry of the world to America and brought the jewelry of America to the world.

clockwise from top

Conference speaker Phil Poirier with his deep draw hydraulic press

Honorary Member Award recipient Helen Drutt English and Helen Shirk
Photo: Anne Wolf

Jeff and Susan Wise with ACC Executive Director Jeffrey Larris and SNAG Executive Director Dana Singer
Photo: Richard Lippenholz

Conference speaker Joyce J. Scott

SNAG Awards at ACC Baltimore

SNAG presented four awards for achievement in jewelry and metalsmithing at the American Craft Council Craft Show in Baltimore this February. Jurors Ulysses Dietz of the Newark Museum and JoAnne Cooper of Mobilia Gallery presented the Award for Excellence to Jeff and Susan Wise of Durango, Colorado, for their jewelry integrating goldsmithing and lapidary techniques. The award consisted of a $500 cash prize and guaranteed admission to next year's show. Honorable Mention Awards were given to Boris Bally, Joan Parcher, and Todd Reed. All the award recipients also received a one-year membership in SNAG.

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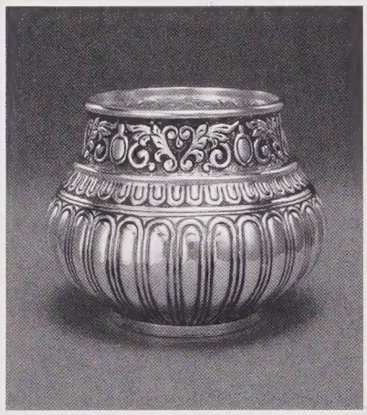

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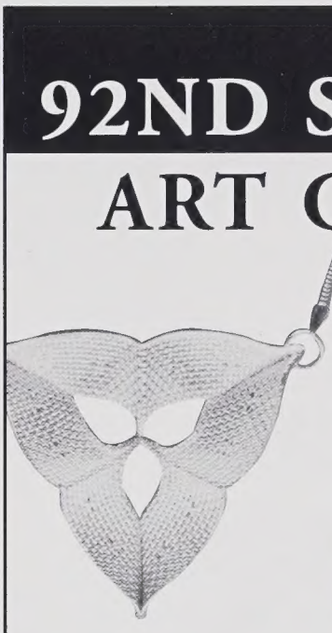

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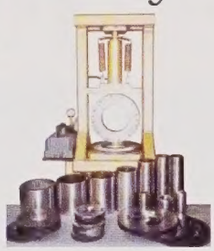

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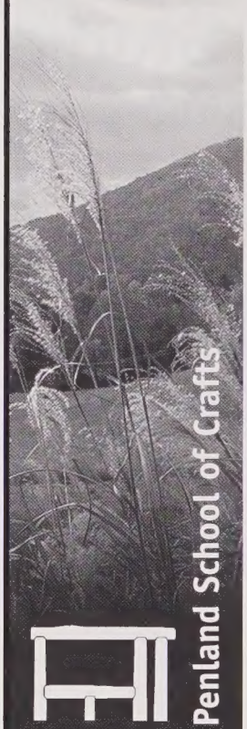

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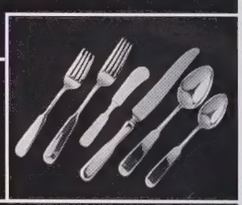

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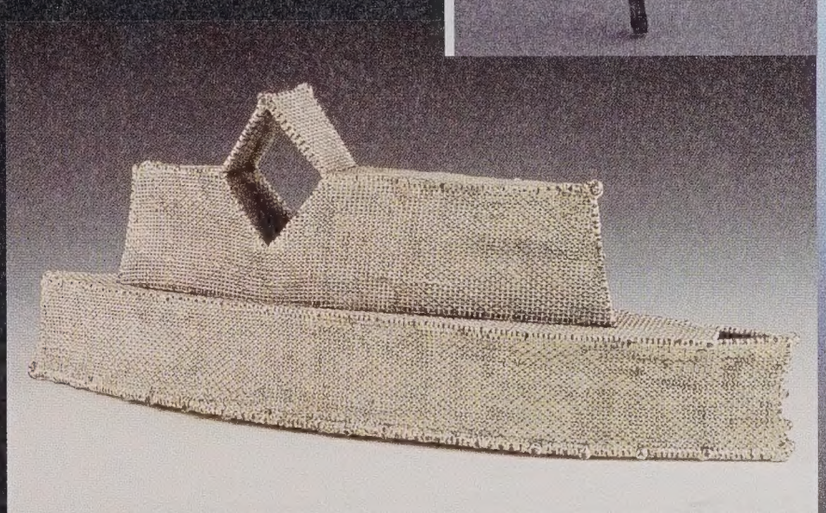

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Chris Y. Smith
Balance Is Too Strenuous (brooch)
silver
4 1/2 x 5 x 1"

Biba Schutz
Circum Pendant, 1996
oxidized bronze and copper, sterling, fine silver
4 1/3 x 1 1/3 x 1 1/3"

(*Metalsmith* Magazine)
Eun-Mee Chung
Passion (brooch), 1999
18k, sterling, diamond, paper
5 x 1 1/2 x 1 1/2"

Billie Jean Theide
Butte #EF-8 (teapot), 1997
bronze, electroformed copper, enamel, patina
4 1/4 x 10 x 12 1/2"
photograph by Billie Jean Theide

Whitney Boin
Post Engagement Ring, 1996
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platinum, 18k
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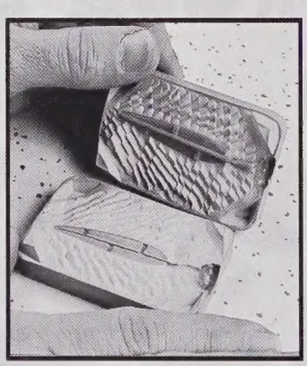

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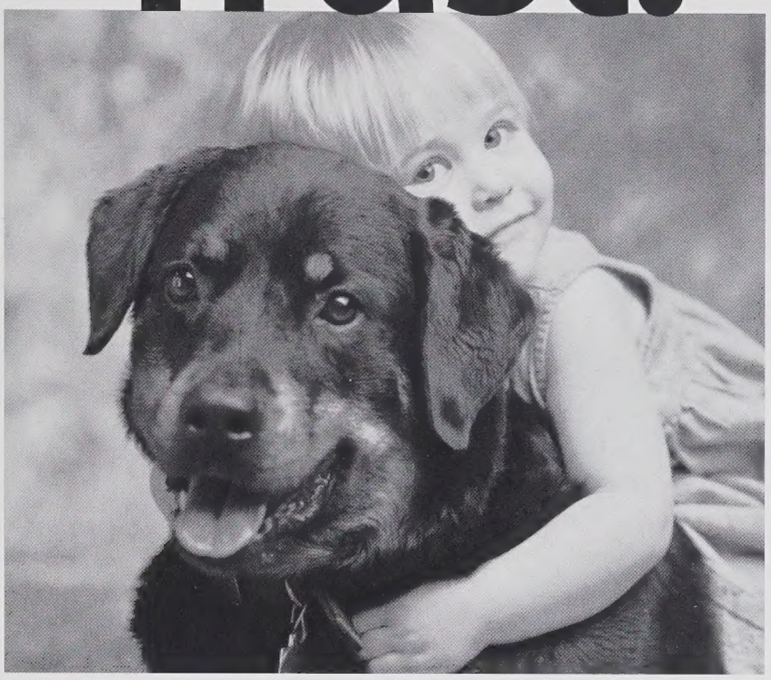

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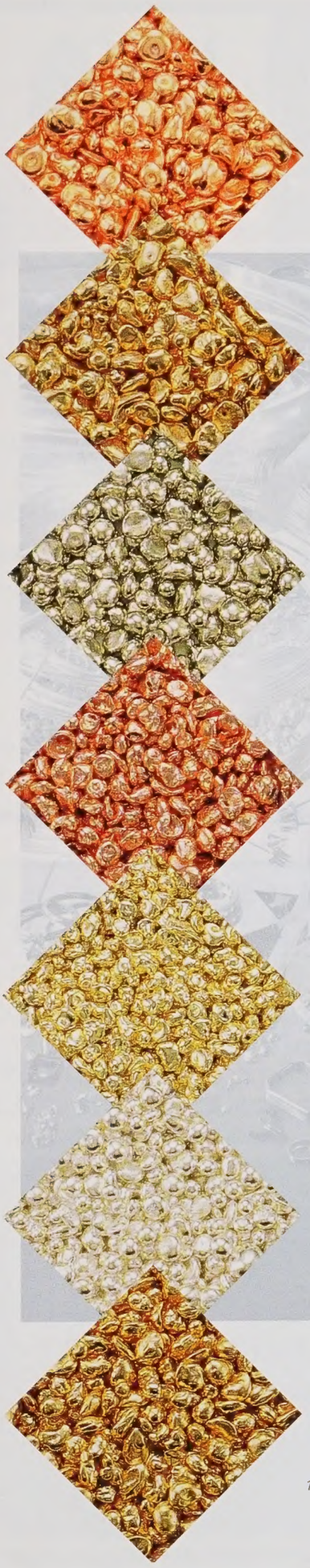

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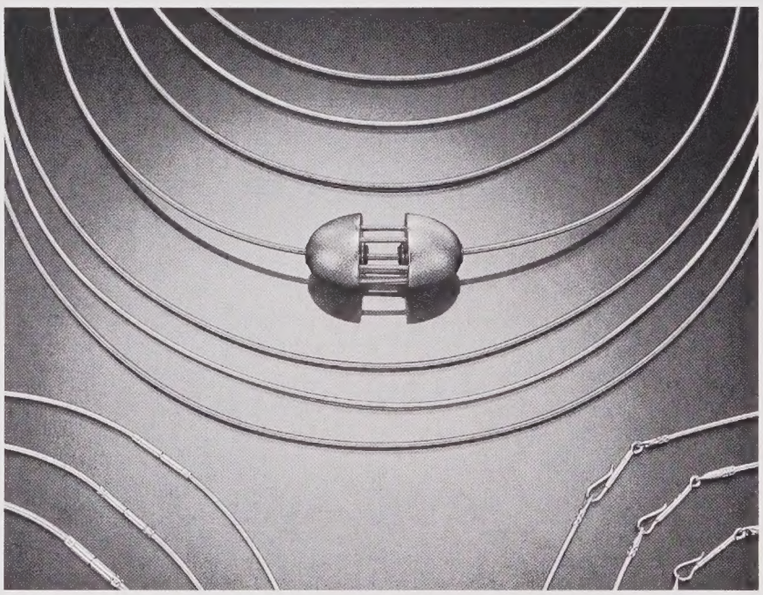

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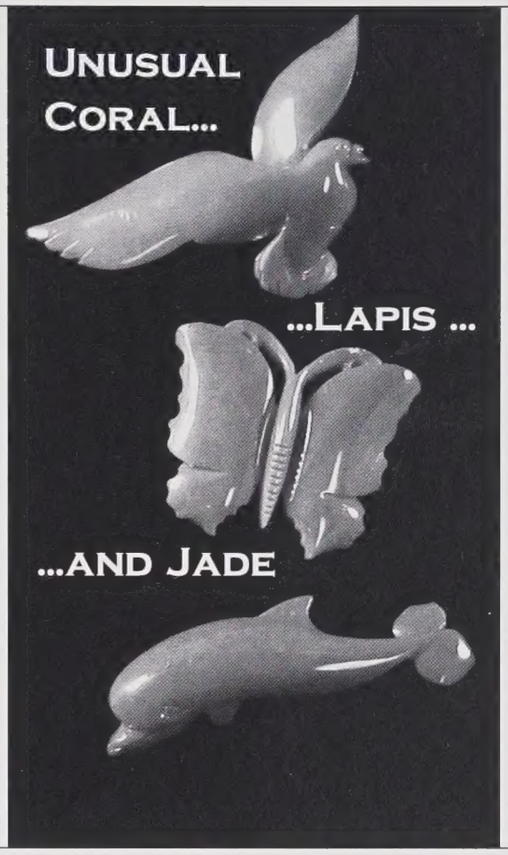

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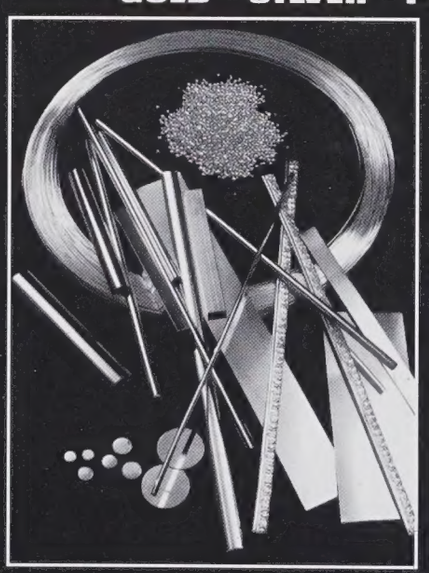

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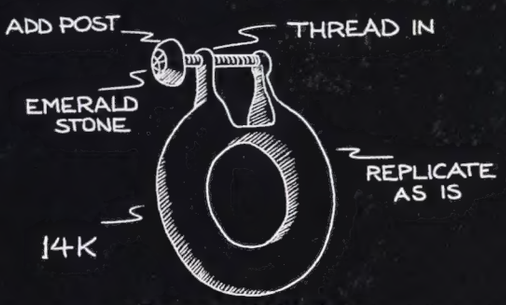

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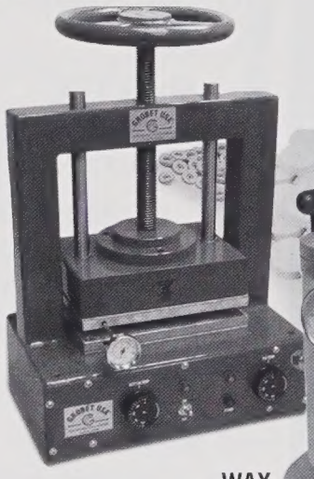

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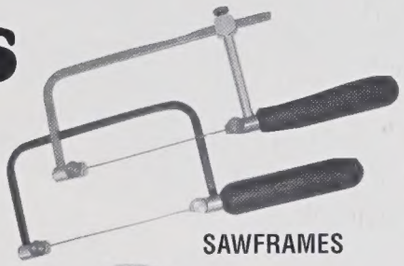

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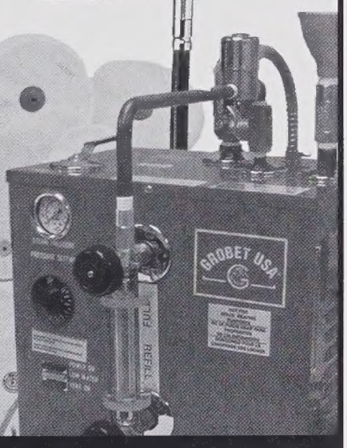

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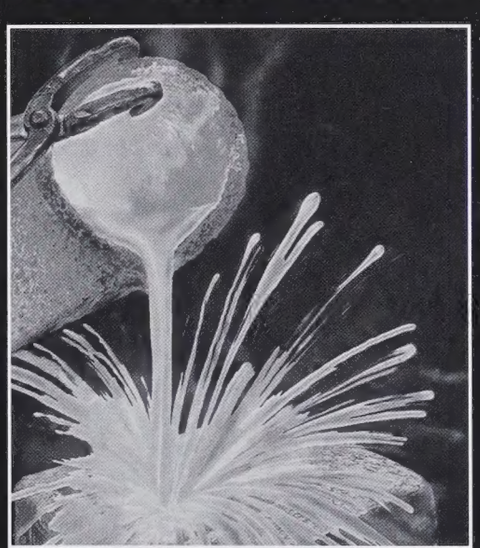

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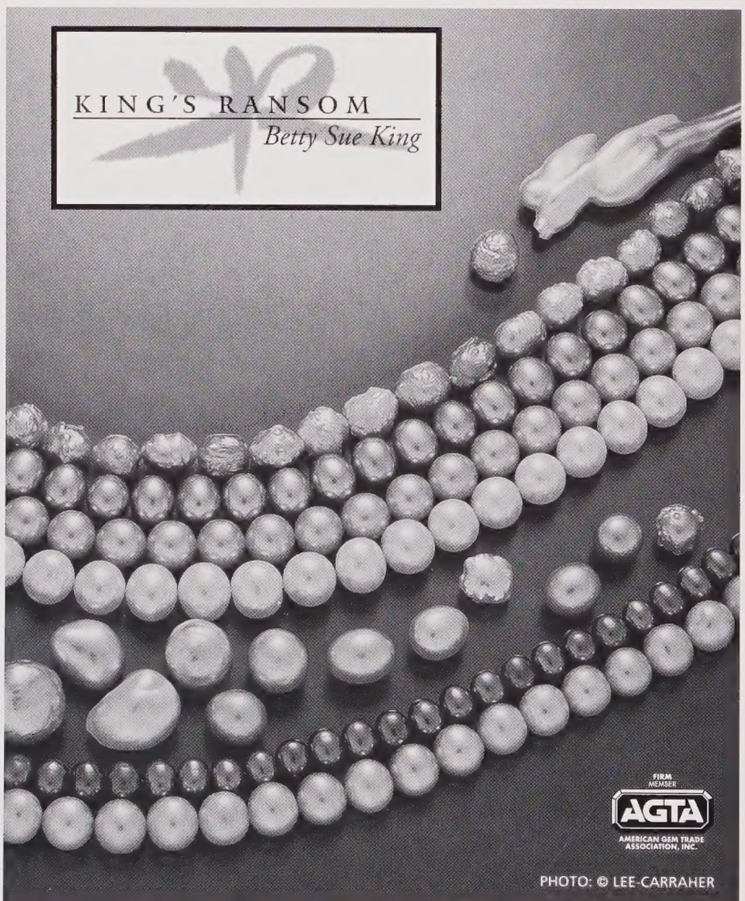

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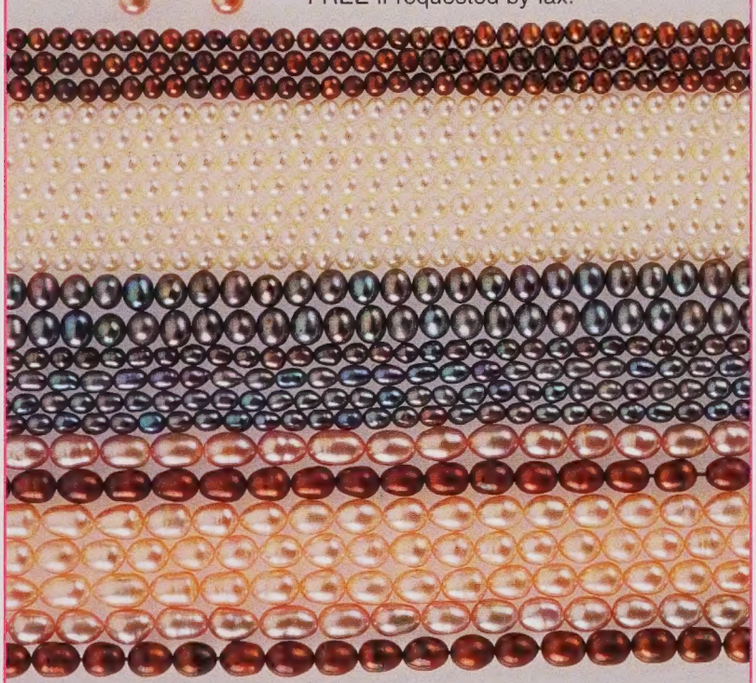

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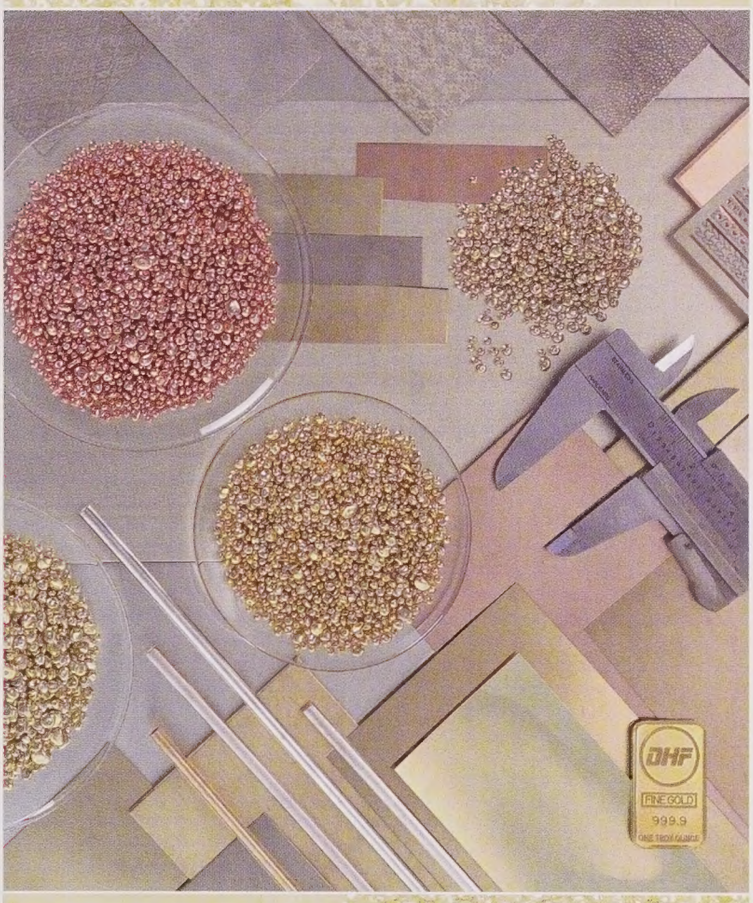

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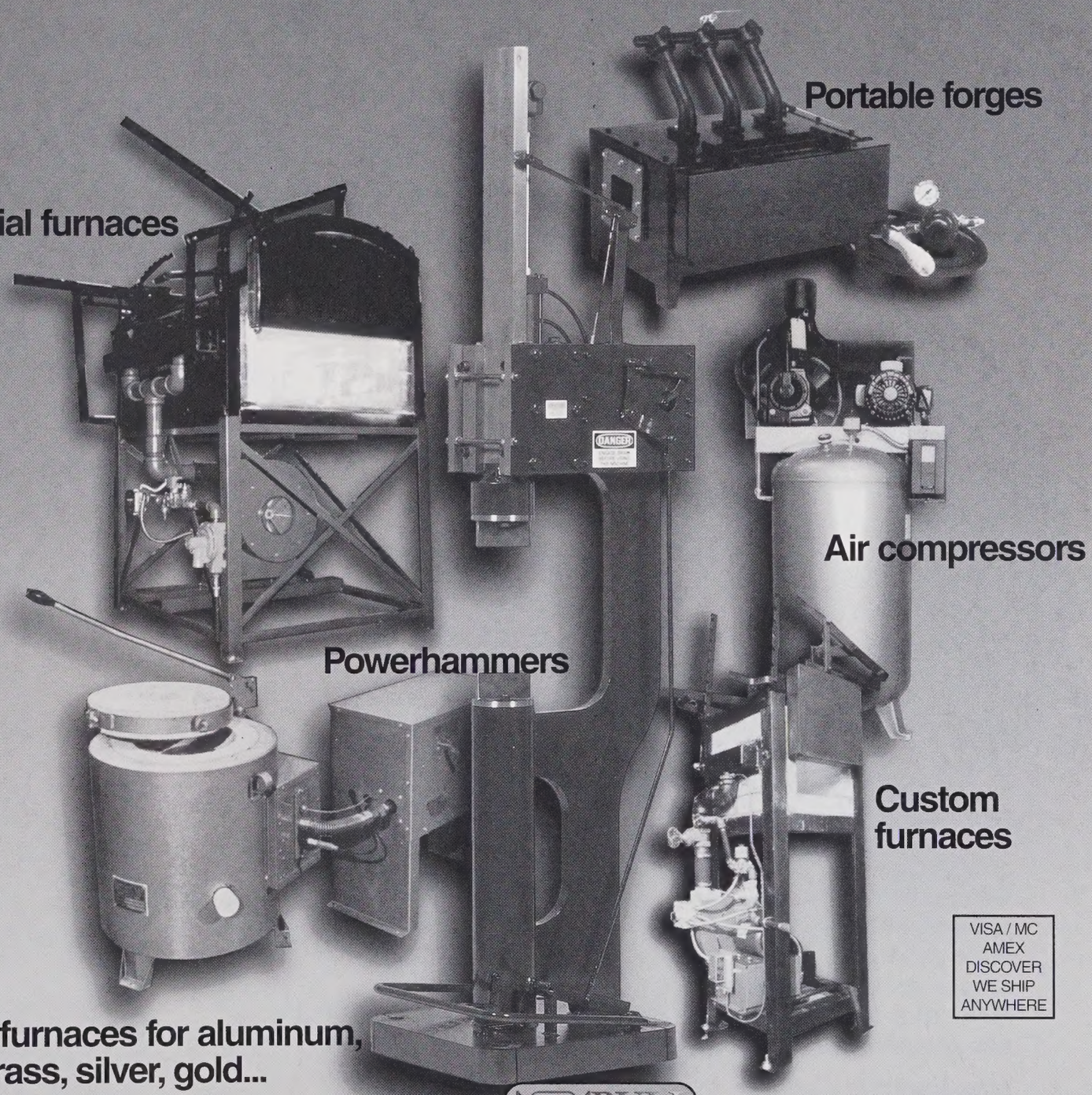

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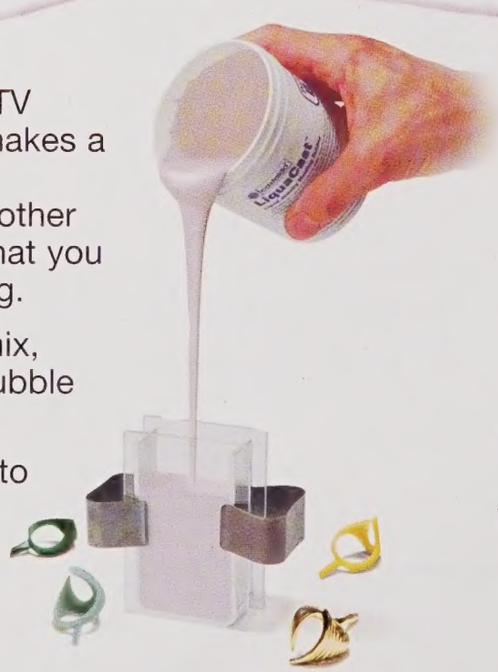

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United is a full service refiner for Gold, Silver, Platinum, Palladium. We specialize in Refining for the jewelry Industry, processing everything from sweeps to karat scrap. United's success in the precious metal industry is due to exceptional levels of detail and uncompromising customer service.

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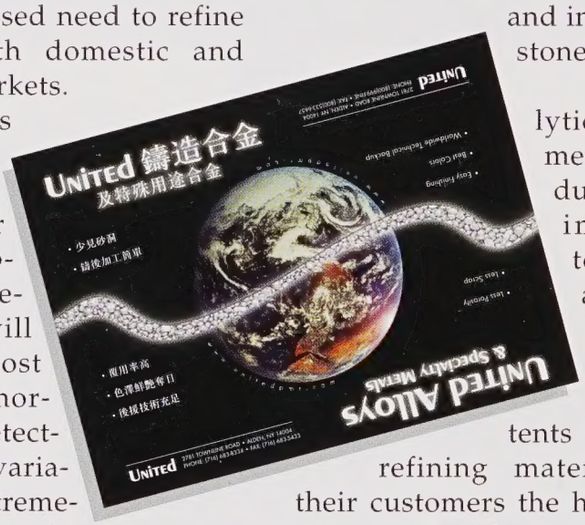
UnitedNews

BY UNITED PRECIOUS METAL REFINING, INC. • ALDEN, NY

Expansion Paves Way into Millennium

UNITED Precious Metal Refining is expanding it's silver refining capabilities and will implement a state of the art refining process to accommodate the increased need to refine scrap from both domestic and international markets.

United has introduced new technologies, along with better analytical equipment and procedures. This will insure the most accurate and thorough assays, detecting the slightest variations. "We are extremely excited about this expansion. It will enable United to service both large and small companies with the most advanced technology available." says Vinny G., Sales Manager of United.



United has also developed a process to successfully retrieve all the precious stones from gold and platinum scrap. This process is designed to preserve the quality and integrity of the stones.

New analytical equipment and procedures are being implemented to determine accurate analysis of the precious metal contents on incoming refining material to give their customers the highest monetary returns. The use of high tech analytical equipment facilitates United to maintain precise composition control and detect the slightest variation in chemistry.

Customer Service Makes United #1

United is a full service refiner for gold, silver, platinum and palladium. United specializes in processing everything from scrap to sweeps for the jewelry industry.

Also, being a major supplier of casting grains and alloys, they are constantly striving to produce new alloys for use in today's improved and innovative casting machines. The implementation of computerized controls and monitoring during production has insured a consistently superior product.

"Our girls in the office are great. We cater to the people who really appreciate our attention to detail." says Angelo "Stick" Lorenzo, Sales Representative at United. Our customer service department and sales team are here for *your support*, for an updated brochure or literature call us at 800-999-FINE. For technical issues on line, e-mail our experts at:

askdoc@unitedpmr.com

WHAT'S NEWS

PEOPLE

To be in the forefront with the latest technology and to cope with the ever growing need for new products and processes, United is happy to announce two new additions to their technical staff. Mr. Ajit Menon is the new Director of Technology. He brings with him over 10 years of expertise in the field of precious metal product development. Mr. Paul Kurtz is the new Chemist and will be responsible for the development of new processes and technology in the refining areas.

ROBOTICS

United plans to promote the use of labor saving equipments such as the use of robots

to help the jewelry industry be more competitive in the market place. A robot, with six axis of freedom, will be able to grind and polish jewelry pieces with utmost accuracy and speed. Research is going on presently to prove the feasibility and economics of such equipment.

WHAT'S NEWS

The John Frei Custom Workbenches

Designed without compromise, these benches are the finest jewelers workbenches available. Built to be beautiful and sturdy, our solid wood workbenches are made in California by expert cabinet makers for jewelers, jewelry schools and jewelry workshops who demand quality tools. Standard features includes: stainless steel lined catch tray, two inch thick butcher block top, locking door with integral bur tray and two concealed security drawers plus six EZglide tool drawers. Available from stock or made to your specifications, in maple or oak. Shipped fully assembled.

Available Options

Simplified drawer lay outs for schools with individually locking drawers. Pull out layout board above locking door, pull out layout board beneath bench top, left hand bench, locking bank of drawers, custom finish/colors/or nude finish, block different locations, walnut or mahogany benches, GRS benchmate mounted in place of bench pin. Also double bank custom workbench. Contact us for your free full color benches selection guide. Or call for specialized design quote for your studio.

Double Bank Custom Workbench
A larger work area with twice as many storage drawers as our standard John Frei workbench. Measures 62" wide by 26" deep and stands 38" tall. Shown in oak.

Bank of Drawers on Casters
These portable storage drawers are made by us to compliment the John Frei custom workbenches. Locking casters makes the bank of drawers easy to move around your shop. Shown in oak.
Measures: 18"W x 26"D x 38"H

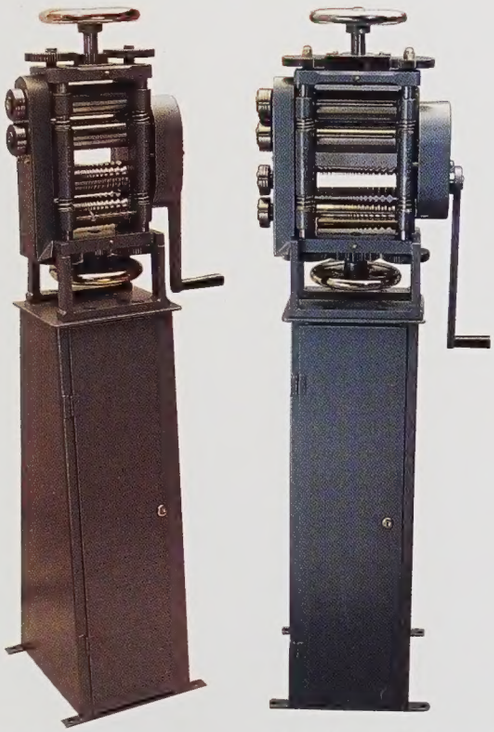
John Frei Custom Workbench
Overall dimensions: Standard Design
49"W x 26"D x 38"H

Detail *Four inch square hardened steel anvil block with bench pin, pull out tool tray with cut out for engravers block, two sturdy pull out arm rests, stain steel lined catch tray slides in and out.*

Detail *Locking top door with integral bur tray, two concealed security drawers, raised lip around bench top, two inch thick butcher block top.*

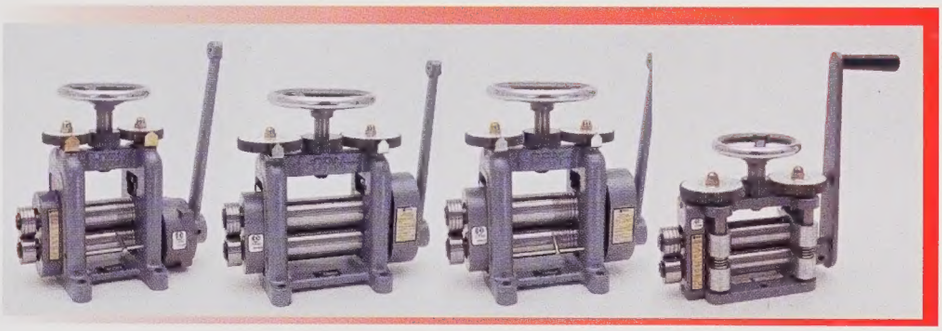
Two Station Custom Workbench
Popular for school and larger workshops. All the features of two separate John Frei workbenches with an added bank of drawers in the center. Shown in oak.
Overall dimension: 103"W x 26"D x 38"H.

Rolling Mill Specialist
Walzmaschinen Spezialist
Laminataio Specialista



D2EX
120mm
With stand #128.115
Without stand #128.116

New 158mm wide Durston D4
Made for using 6" wide sheet while doing roller texturing / imprinting
The widest hand rolling mill available.
With stand #128.101
Without stand #128.112



New Deluxe 100mm
Combo #128.108N
Flat #128.109N

New Deluxe 130mm
Combo #128.130
Flat #128.132

New Deluxe 150mm
Combo #128.118N
Flat #128.119N

Mini 100mm (pictured) **or Mini 80**
Combo 100 #128.100
Flat 100 #128.102

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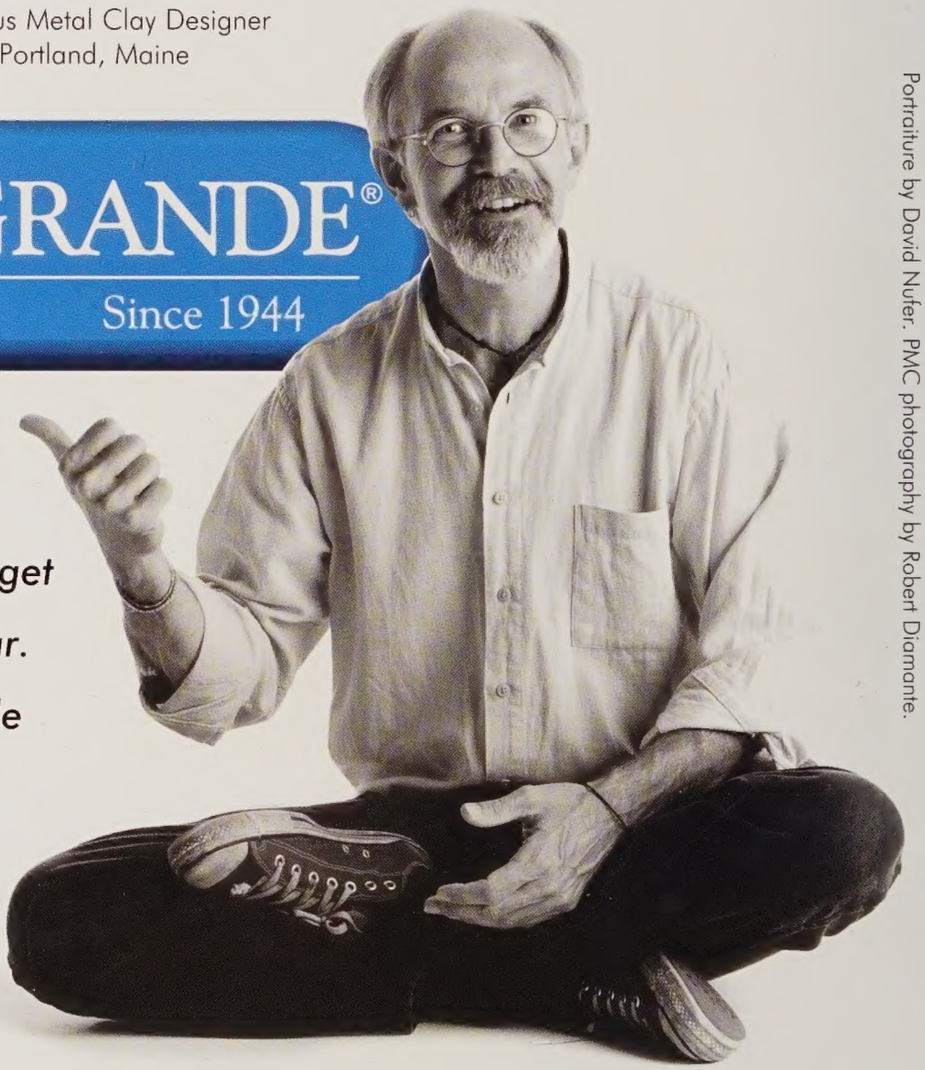

Portraiture by David Nufer. PMC photography by Robert Diamante.

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